

CRASHED

A comic book cover illustration. At the top, the word 'CRASHED' is written in a large, black, distressed, stencil-like font. A thick, horizontal red line, resembling a tear or a blood splatter, cuts across the middle of the title. Below the title, a woman with dark, wavy hair is depicted from the waist up. She has a determined, shouting expression with her mouth wide open. On her left chest, the word 'PROPERTY' is tattooed in a bold, black, sans-serif font. She wears a grey, torn, and striped tank top. Her right arm is raised, holding a large, silver, rectangular object that looks like a piece of metal or a weapon. On her right forearm, the words 'KNOW YOUR ROLE' are written in a black, sans-serif font. Her left hand is clenched into a fist, holding a piece of white fabric or a torn shirt. The background is a grey, textured surface with a large, bright red star shape behind her. The overall style is gritty and action-oriented.

**TOM
MORELLO**

**SCOTT
HEPBURN**

**DAN
JACKSON**

ORCHID™



ORCHARD™

VOLUME 2

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ORCHID VOLUME 2

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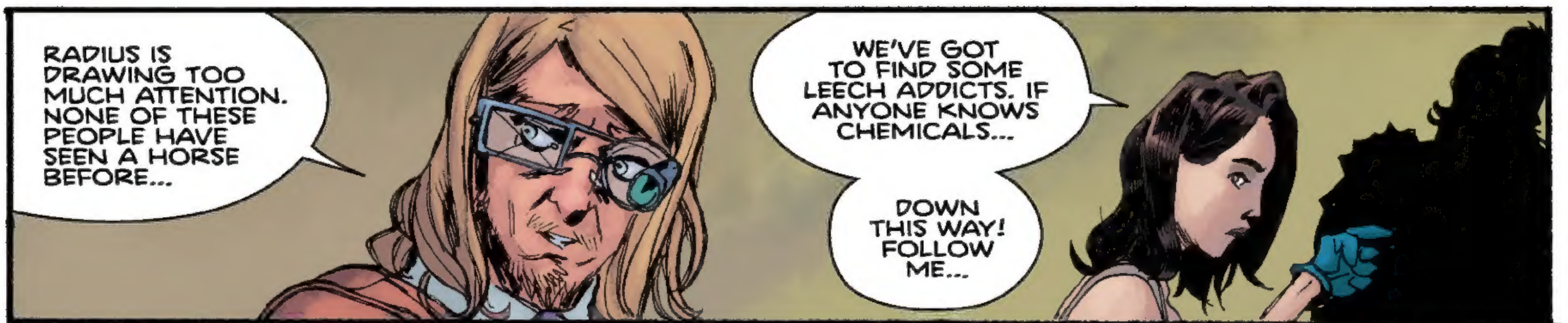


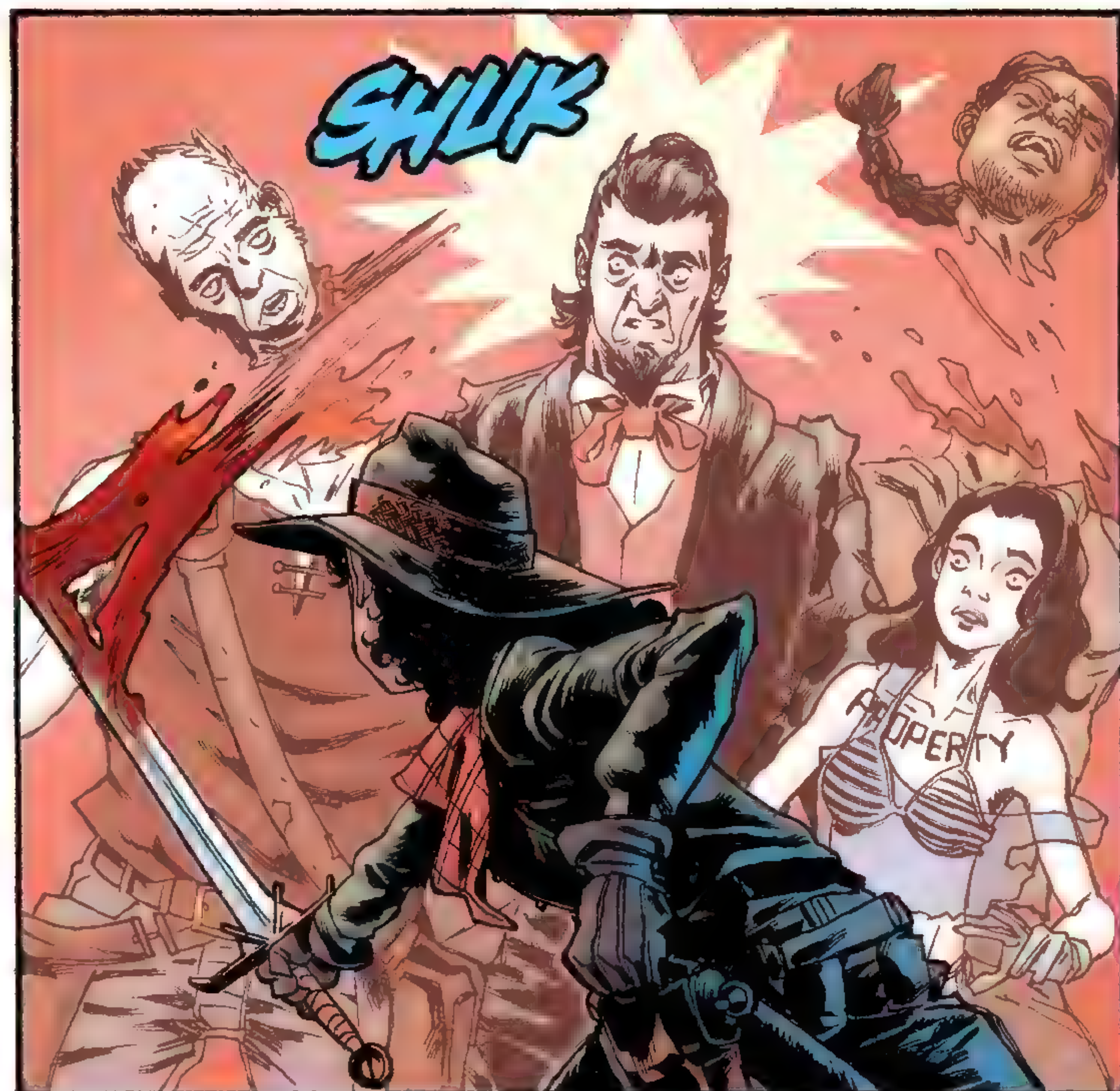
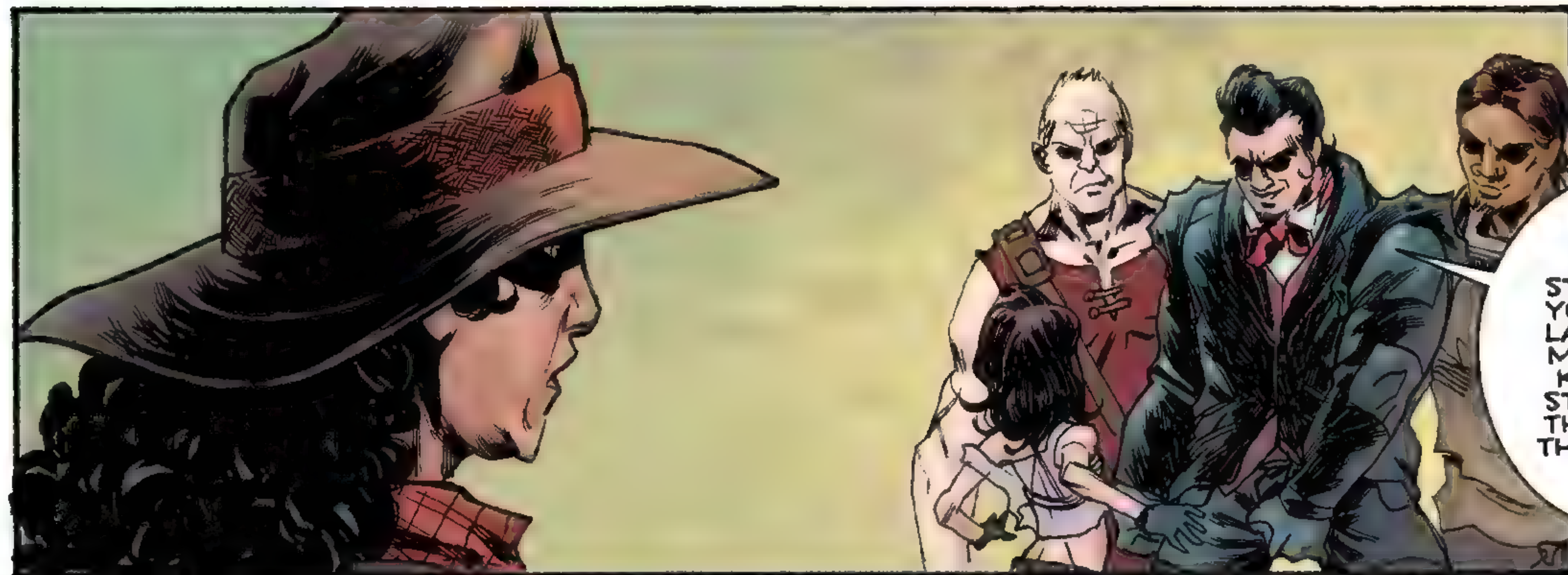


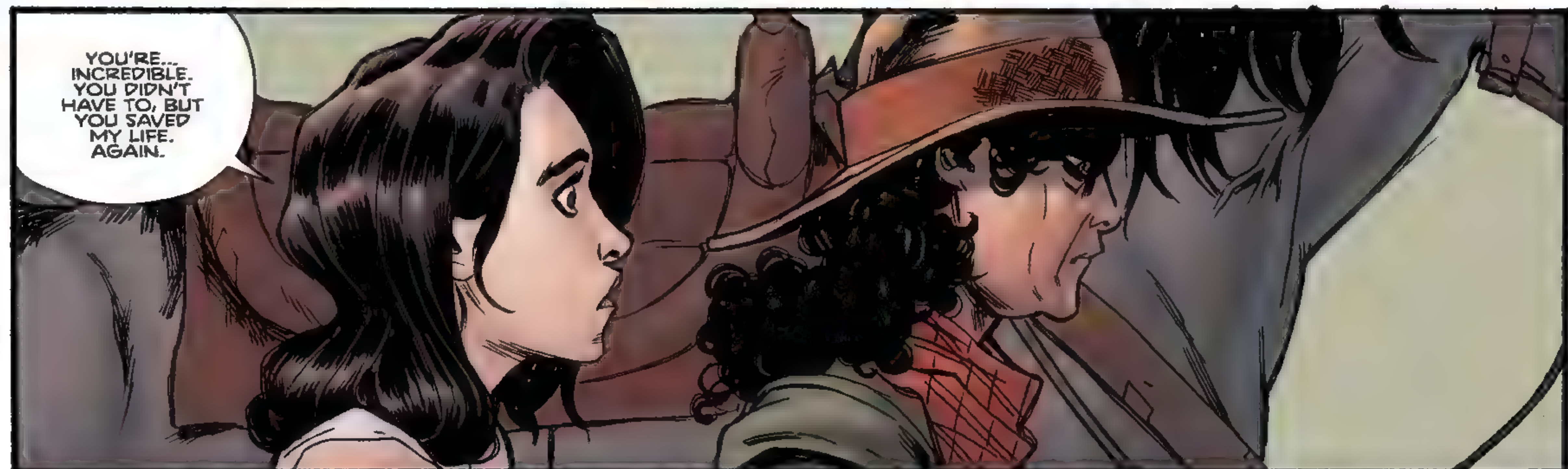
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THIS IS THE PLACE?

YES. BUT SOLDIERS ARE WATCHING. LET'S GET INSIDE. THAT LEECH ADDICT SAID TO ASK FOR SOMEONE NAMED...



...FEATHERS?

VEE CLOSED. YOU GO AWAY.



WE ARE LOOKING FOR A MAN NAMED WESTIN. DO YOU KNOW HIM?

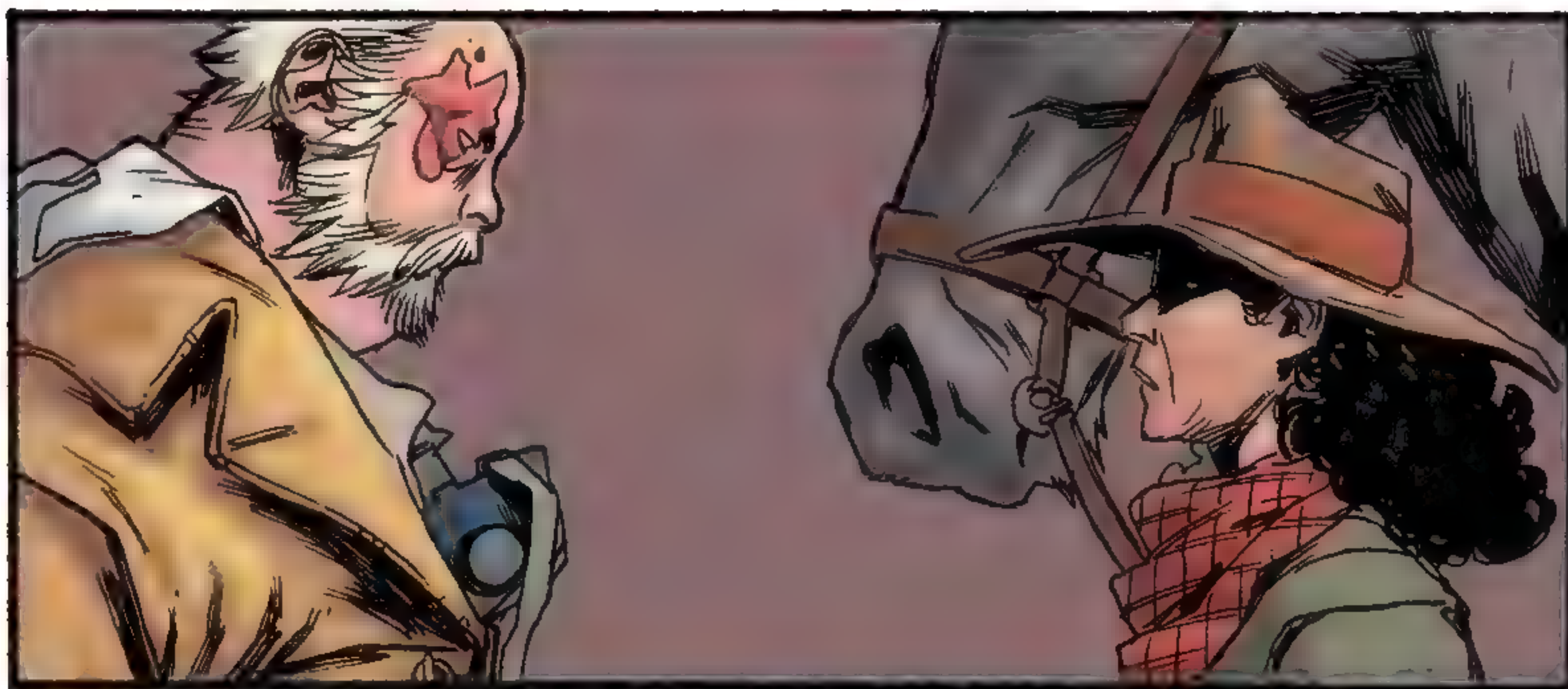
NO VESTIN. GO AWAY NOW.



WHY DON'T YOU SEE IF HE'S HERE? I'M A VERY OLD FRIEND. HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO SEE ME.



I WOULDN'T BE TOO SURE ABOUT THAT.





HERE I AM KNOWN
SIMPLY AS *THE APOTHECARY*.
IT HAS BEEN SOME TIME
SINCE ANYONE HAS CALLED
ME "WESTIN."

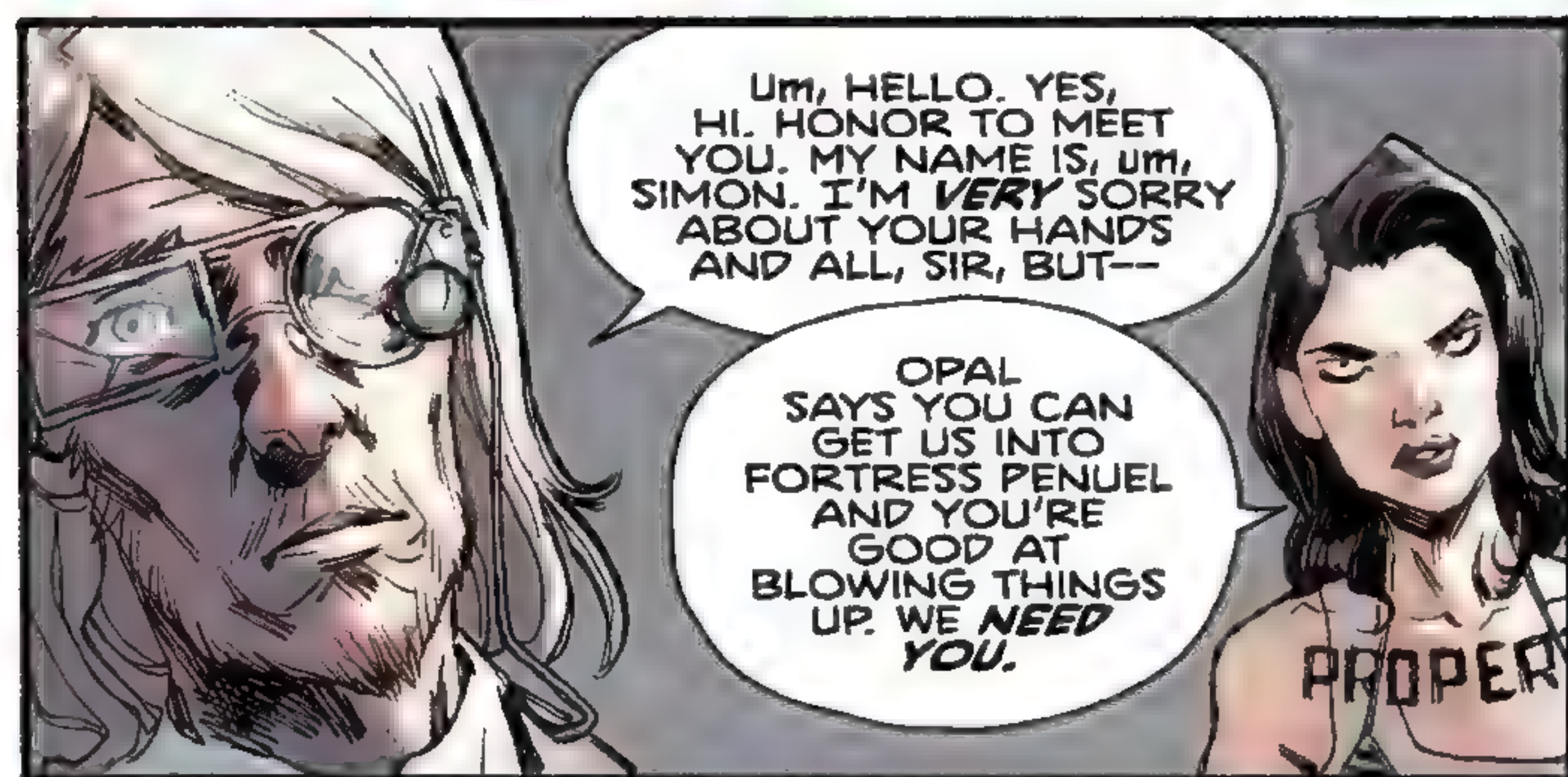
LOOK AT
THIS PLACE! THIS
GUY MUST RUN THE
DRUG TRADE FOR
ALL OF GATH!

I NEED
YOUR HELP, OLD
FRIEND. AND WE
DON'T HAVE MUCH
TIME. WE ARE...
CONTINUING
GENERAL CHINA'S
WORK.



HA! Oh,
REALLY? I LOST
MY *HANDS* TAKING
ORDERS FROM
THAT DERANGED
MESSIAH!

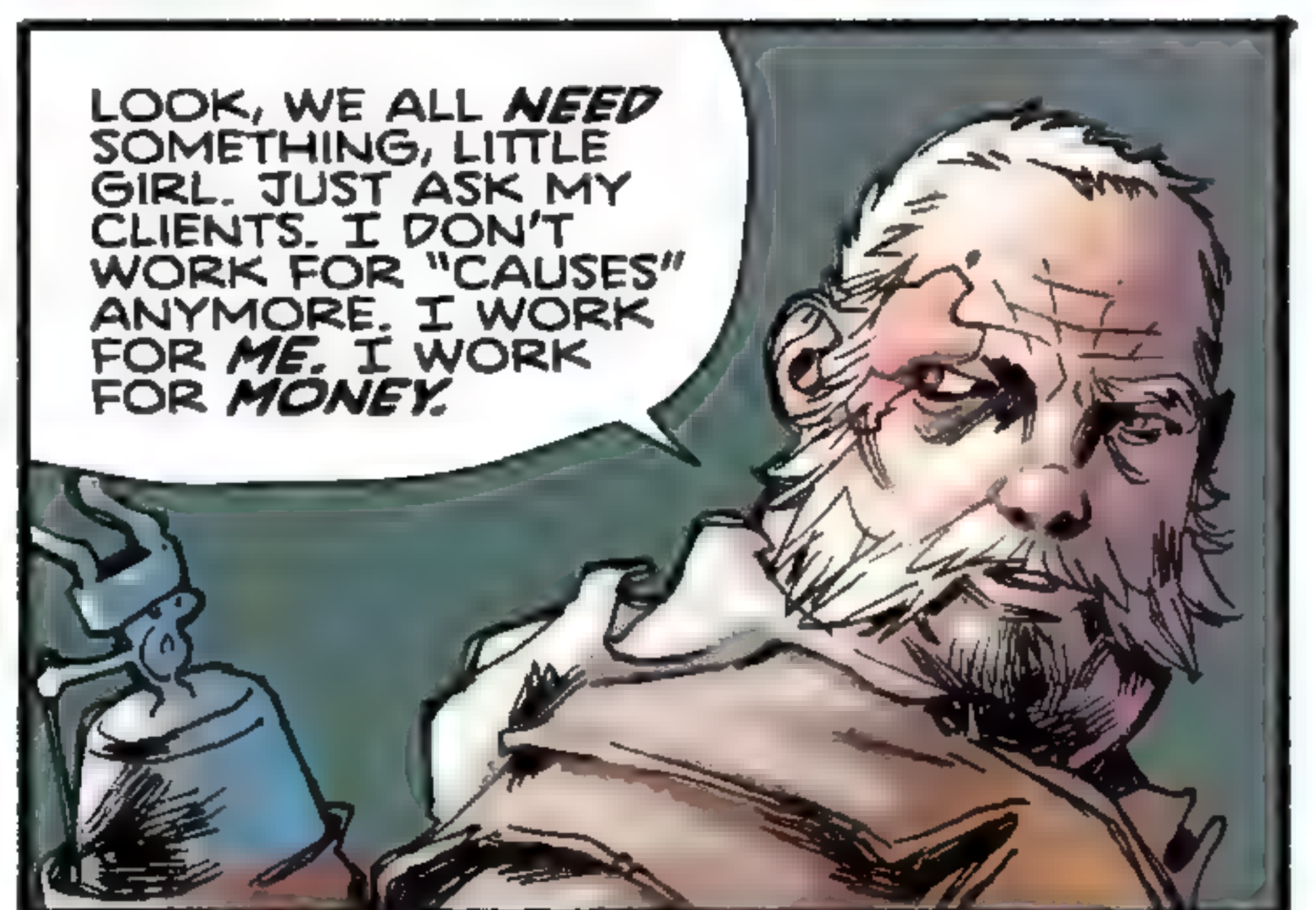
HE AND HIS
"CAUSE" ARE LONG
GONE AND, AS YOU
CAN SEE, MY
HANDS HAVEN'T
COME BACK!



Um, HELLO. YES,
HI. HONOR TO MEET
YOU. MY NAME IS, um,
SIMON. I'M *VERY* SORRY
ABOUT YOUR HANDS
AND ALL, SIR, BUT--

OPAL
SAYS YOU CAN
GET US INTO
FORTRESS PENUEL
AND YOU'RE
GOOD AT
BLOWING THINGS
UP. WE *NEED*
YOU.

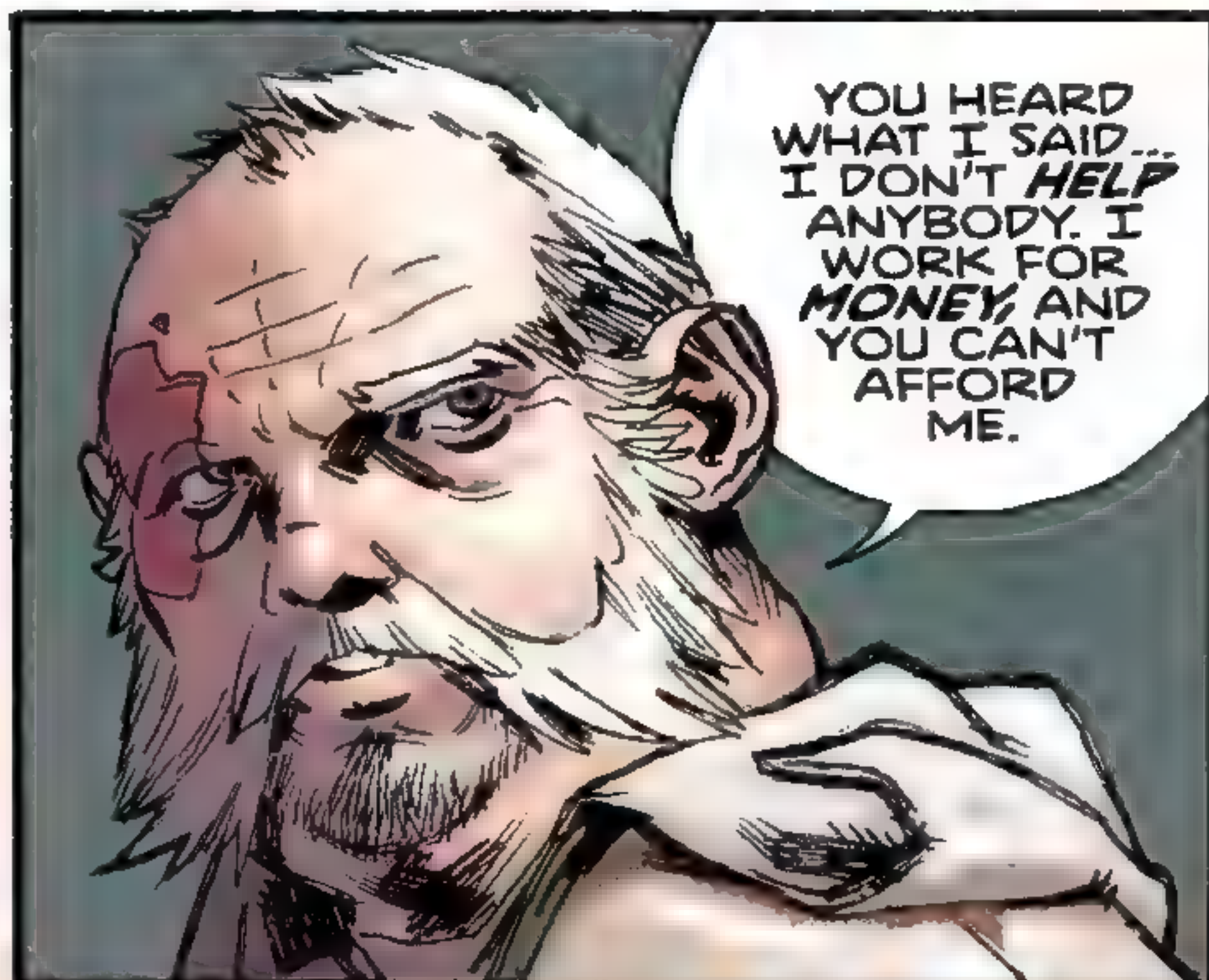
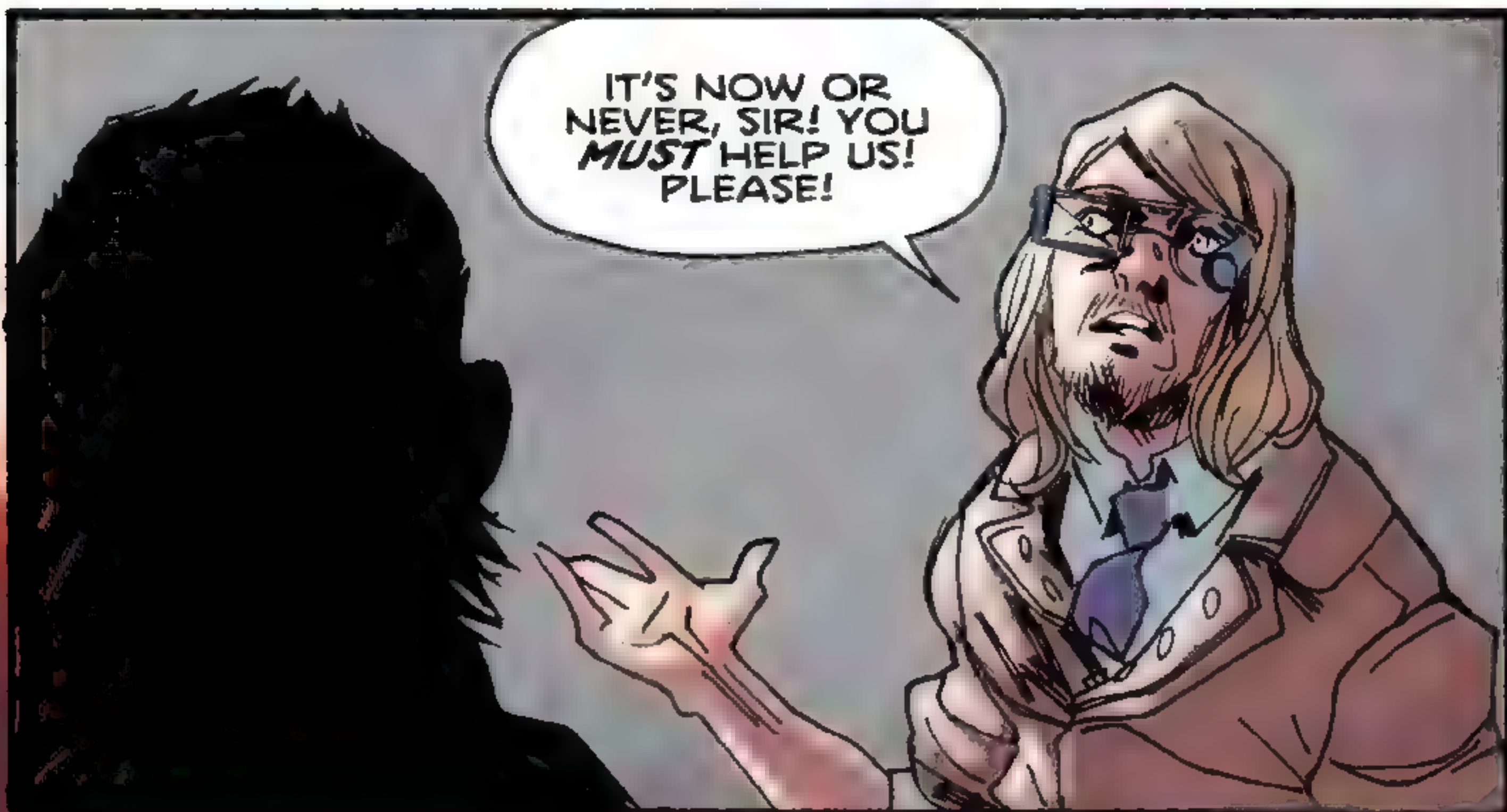
PROPER



LOOK, WE ALL *NEED*
SOMETHING, LITTLE
GIRL. JUST ASK MY
CLIENTS. I DON'T
WORK FOR "CAUSES"
ANYMORE. I WORK
FOR *ME*. I WORK
FOR *MONEY*.



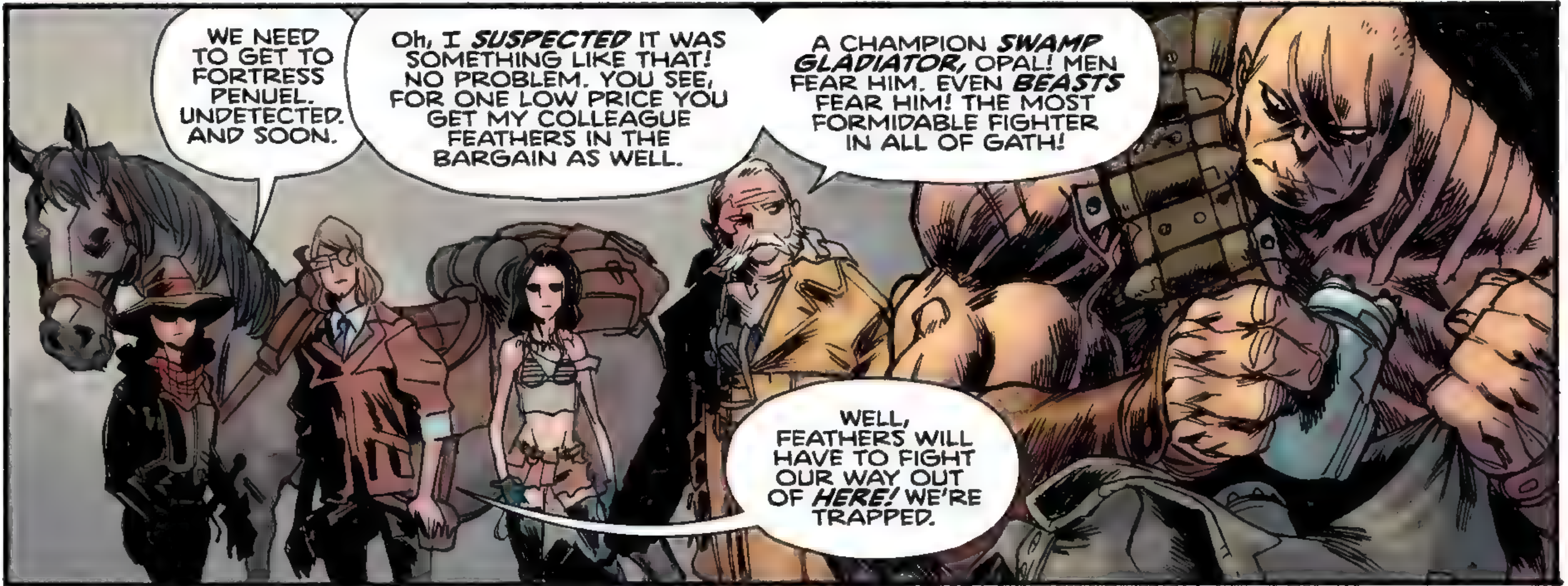
SOLDIERS
COMING!





ZOLDIERS
NO BODDER.

GOOD.
THERE'S BEEN
A CHANGE
OF PLANS,
FEATHERS!
WE'RE LEAVING.
BRING...
EVERYTHING.

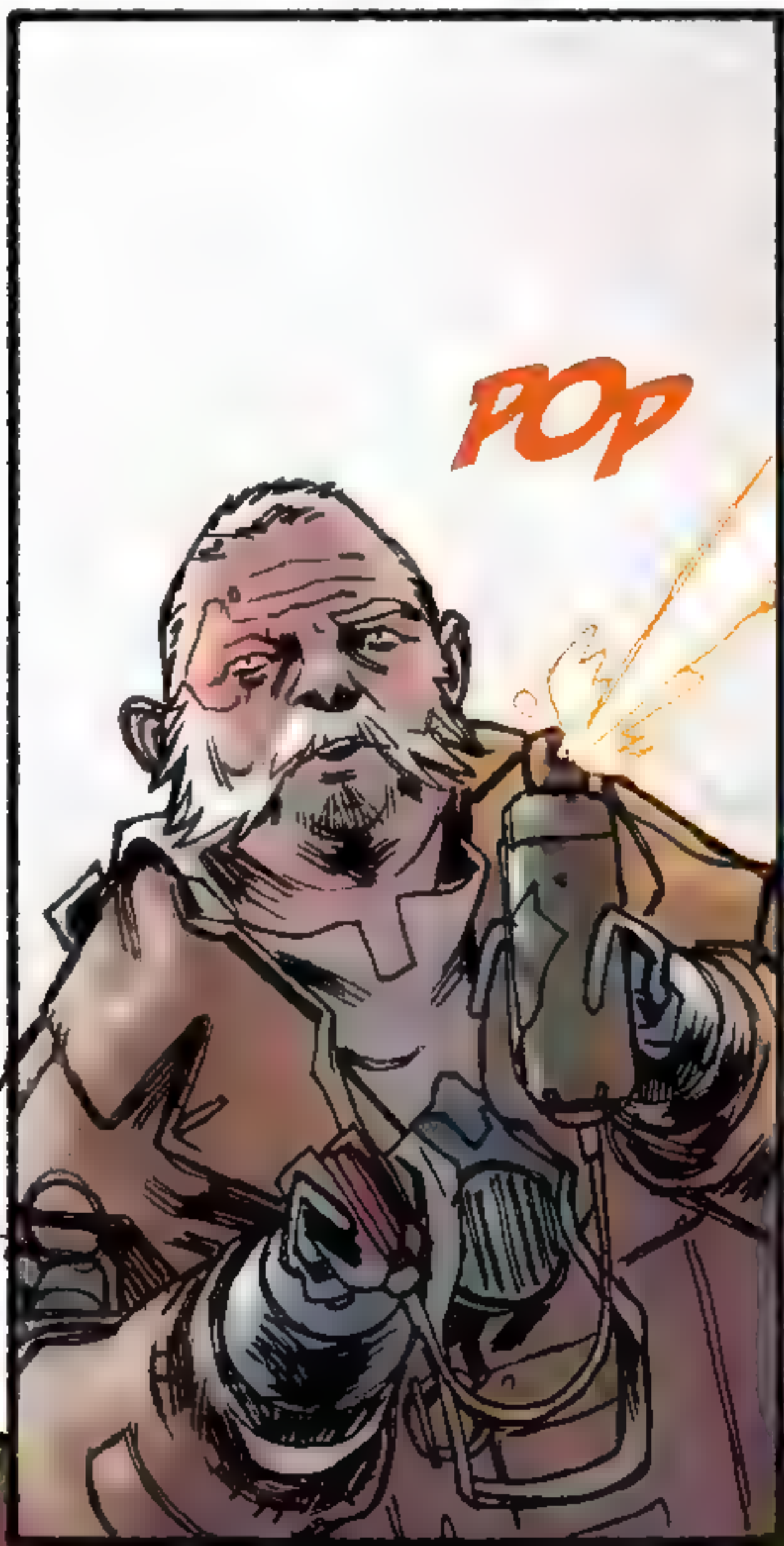


WE NEED
TO GET TO
FORTRESS
PENUEL.
UNDETECTED.
AND SOON.

Oh, I *SUSPECTED* IT WAS
SOMETHING LIKE THAT!
NO PROBLEM. YOU SEE,
FOR ONE LOW PRICE YOU
GET MY COLLEAGUE
FEATHERS IN THE
BARGAIN AS WELL.

A CHAMPION *SWAMP*
GLADIATOR, OPAL! MEN
FEAR HIM. EVEN *BEASTS*
FEAR HIM! THE MOST
FORMIDABLE FIGHTER
IN ALL OF GATH!

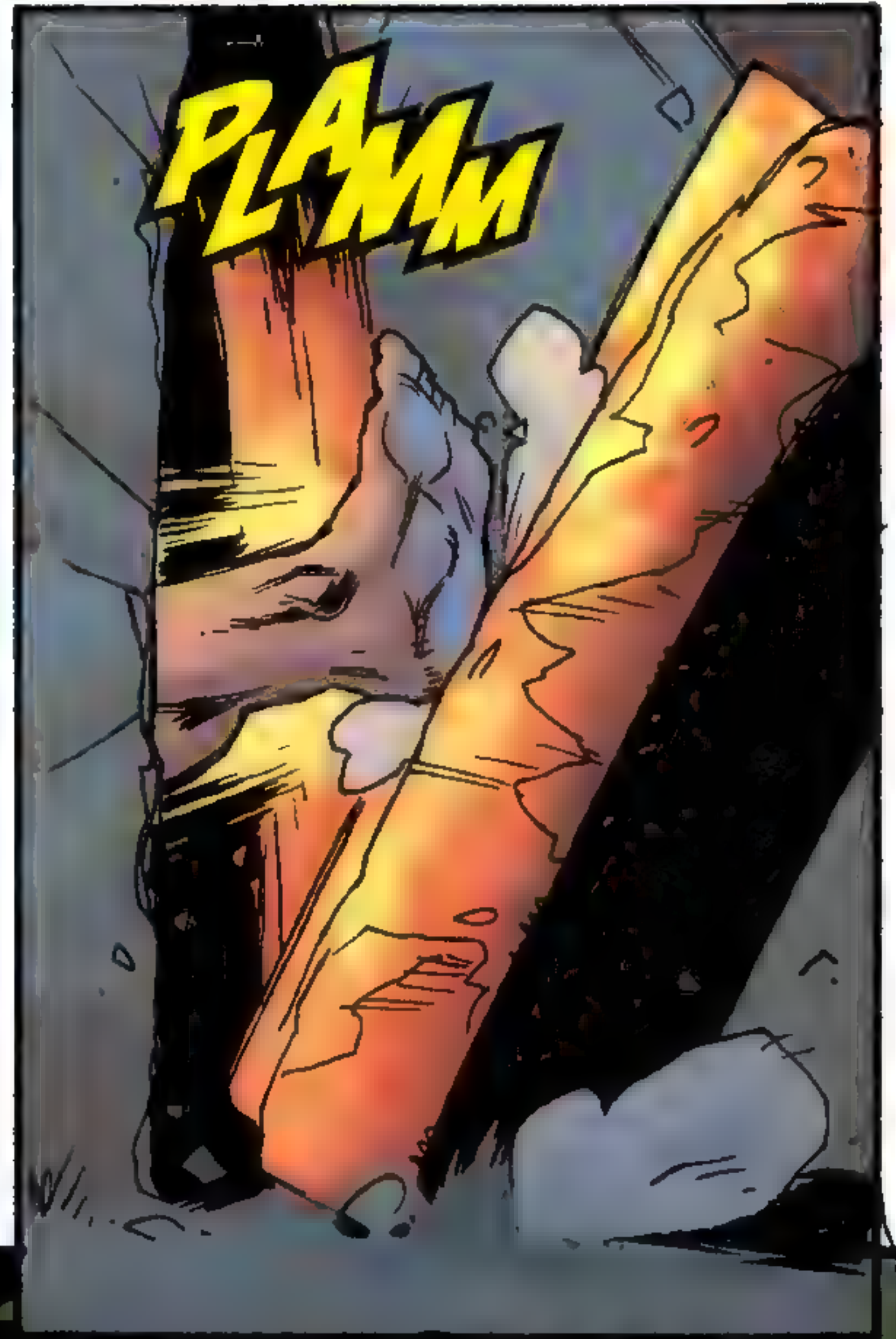
WELL,
FEATHERS WILL
HAVE TO FIGHT
OUR WAY OUT
OF *HERE!* WE'RE
TRAPPED.



POP



NOT TO
WORRY...



PLAMM



...FEATHERS
AND I WILL
GET YOU TO
FORTRESS
PENUEL.

SHOOOSH

**THE DUNGEONS OF
FORTRESS PENUEL.**

I COUNTED
EXACTLY FIFTY
DEAD. BUT DEAD
OR ALIVE, BRIDGE
PEOPLE ALL LOOK
THE SAME, DON'T
YOU THINK?

AN INNATELY INFERIOR
RACE, THE POOR. THE
SHAPE OF THE HEAD.
THE SET OF THE EYES.
BORN TO SERVE
THEIR BETTERS.

STILL, WAS
IT HARD FOR YOU
TO WATCH THEM DIE,
ANZIO? INNOCENTS
PERISHING BECAUSE
YOU WITHHOLD
INFORMATION?

I **TOLD** YOU, THERE
IS NO SHADOW REBEL
ARMY! NO TROOPS,
NO SCOUTS, NO
SYMPATHIZERS, NO
ENCLAVE. IT'S...
JUST...ME.

Pah! YOU
FOOL! YOU
ARE GOING
TO **DIE** BY
FIRING SQUAD
IN A MATTER
OF DAYS!
HOW MANY
BRIDGE PEOPLE
WILL YOU
NEEDLESSLY
SACRIFICE IN
THE MEANTIME?
WHY...WON'T
YOU...**TALK?**



YOU SEEM
NERVOUS, GLETKIN.
WHY? WHAT WILL
YOUR MASTER DO
TO YOU IF I **DON'T**
TALK? HMM...?
YOU'VE ALREADY
BEEN DEMOTED TO
TORTURER!



YOU SHUT
YOUR...! WHEN
TORTURE IS DONE
TO EXTEND OR
PRESERVE POWER
IT IS A **GREAT DUTY**
AND VIRTUE! AND...
I **ENJOY** MY
WORK, SCUM!



SOOO, IF
YOU'RE LUCKY,
PERHAPS JUST
ANOTHER
DEMOTION?



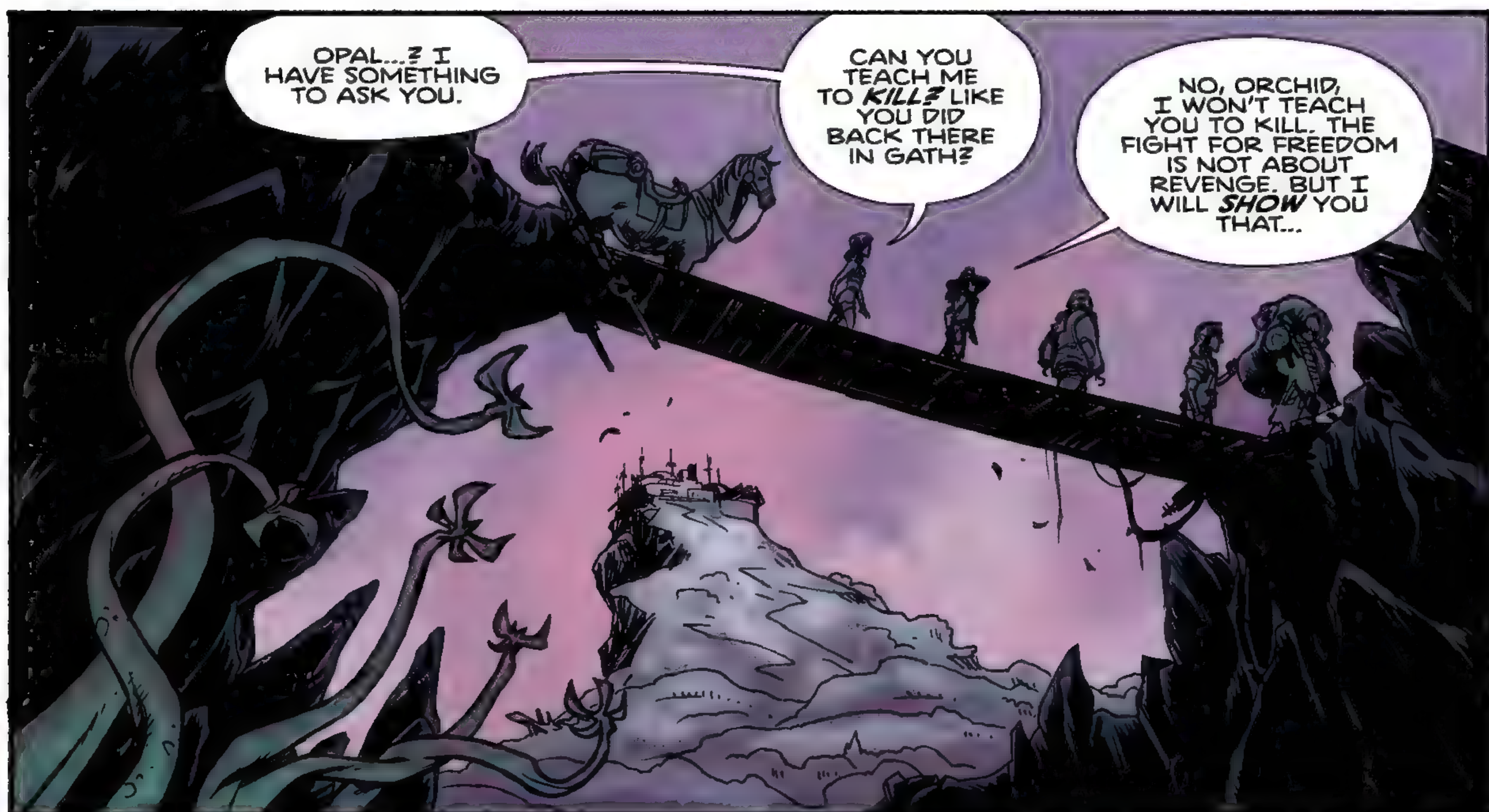
AND IF YOU'RE **NOT**
LUCKY, PERHAPS
SOMETHING...WORSE?



WHY, YOU...!
YOU WILL BE
BLOWN TO
BITS ALL
OVER STADIA
PENUEL ON THE
ANNIVERSARY
OF THE DEATH
OF YOUR
BELOVED SAINT,
GENERAL
CHINA! THAT'S
WHAT YOU...
YOU...



**GUARDS! BRING FIFTY
MORE BRIDGE RATS!
NOW! KILL THEM
ONE...AT...A...TIME
IN FRONT OF THE
PRISONER!**



OPAL...? I HAVE SOMETHING TO ASK YOU.

CAN YOU TEACH ME TO *KILL* LIKE YOU DID BACK THERE IN GATH?

NO, ORCHID, I WON'T TEACH YOU TO KILL. THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM IS NOT ABOUT REVENGE. BUT I WILL *SHOW* YOU THAT...

"...NO AMOUNT OF ARMS CAN STOP A PEOPLE HUNGRY FOR BREAD AND THIRSTY FOR JUSTICE.

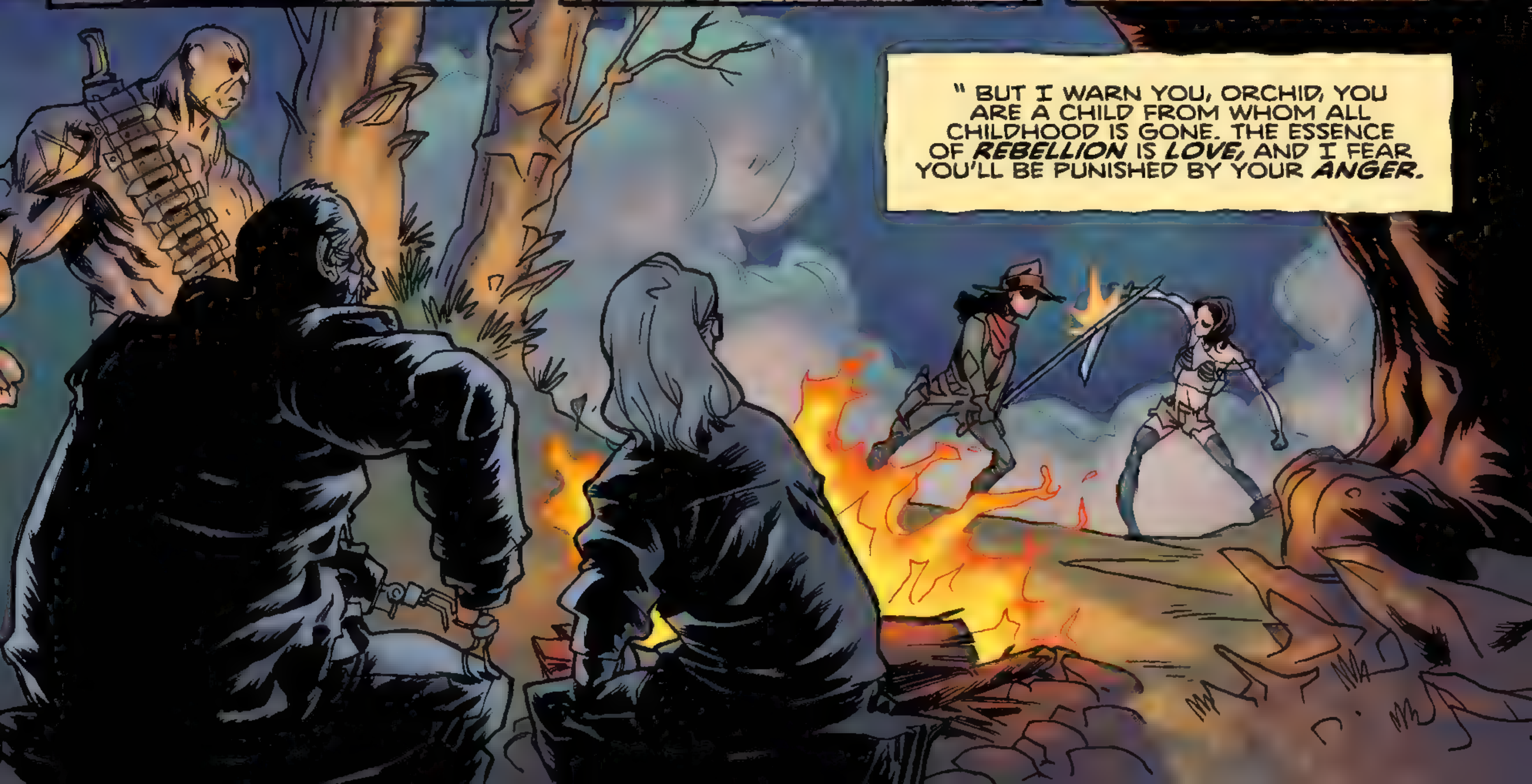


"THAT TO STIR THE OPPRESSED TO THE POINT OF GETTING OFF THEIR KNEES AND *TAKING* WHAT IS RIGHTFULLY THEIRS IS A *SACRED ACT*.



"THAT IN ORDER TO WIN A *WAR*, YOU MUST FIRST CONQUER *YOURSELF*.

" BUT I WARN YOU, ORCHID, YOU ARE A CHILD FROM WHOM ALL CHILDHOOD IS GONE. THE ESSENCE OF *REBELLION* IS *LOVE*, AND I FEAR YOU'LL BE PUNISHED BY YOUR *ANGER*.





"LOOK AROUND YOU.
TIME ERODES ALL
ACHIEVEMENTS. DEATH
CUTS SHORT ALL PLANS.

"WE ARE
STEWARDS OF
NOTHING IN
THE LONG RUN.
NATURE EXISTS
NEITHER FOR
US, AND
POSSESSES
A STAYING
POWER..."



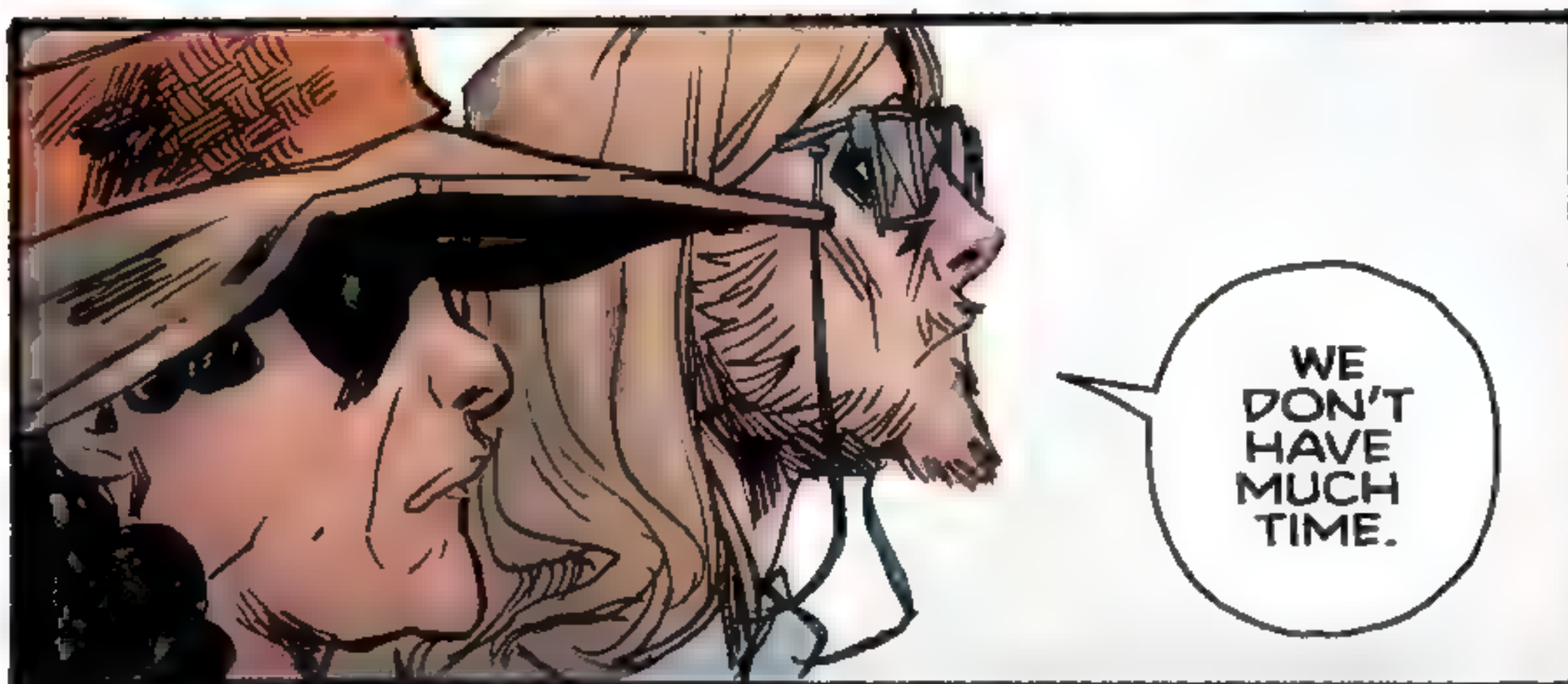
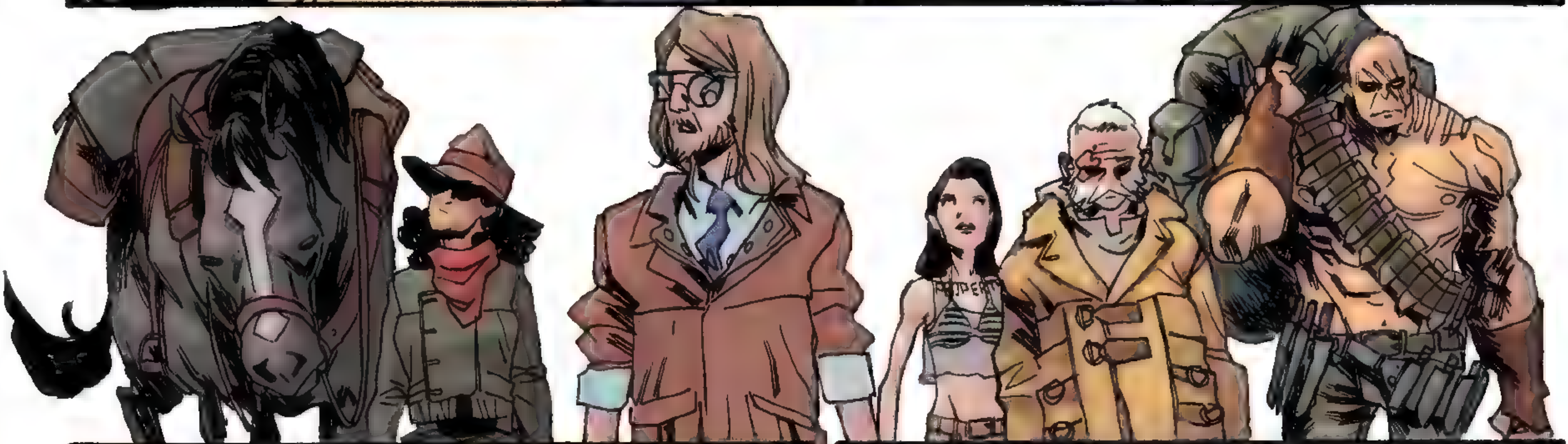
AKK!

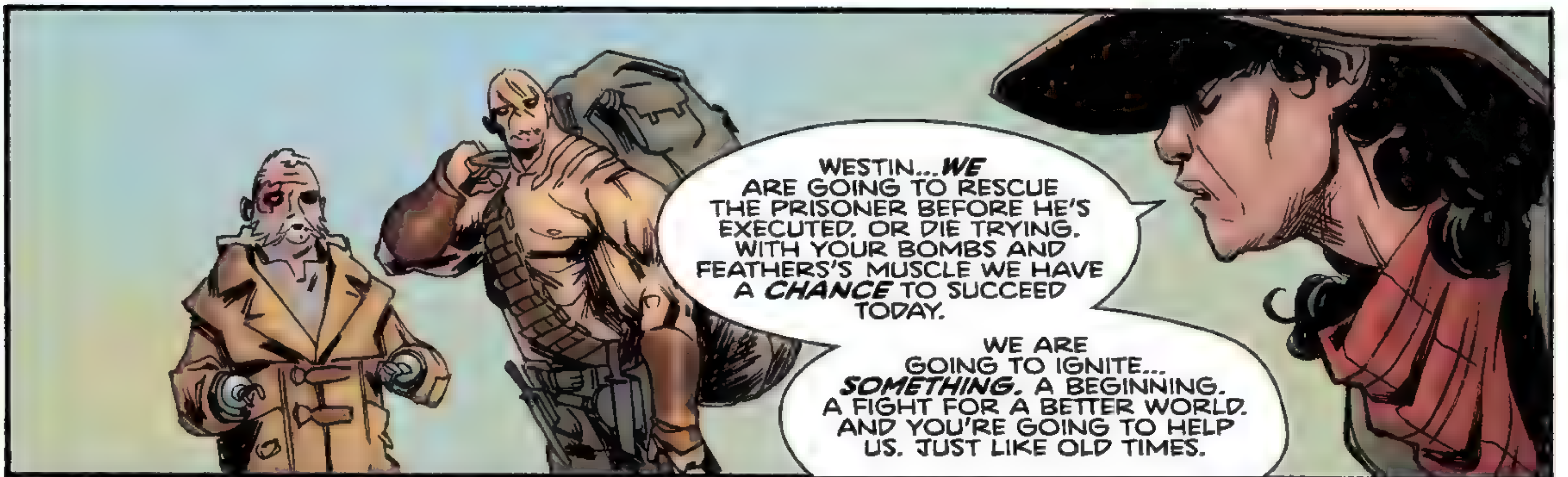
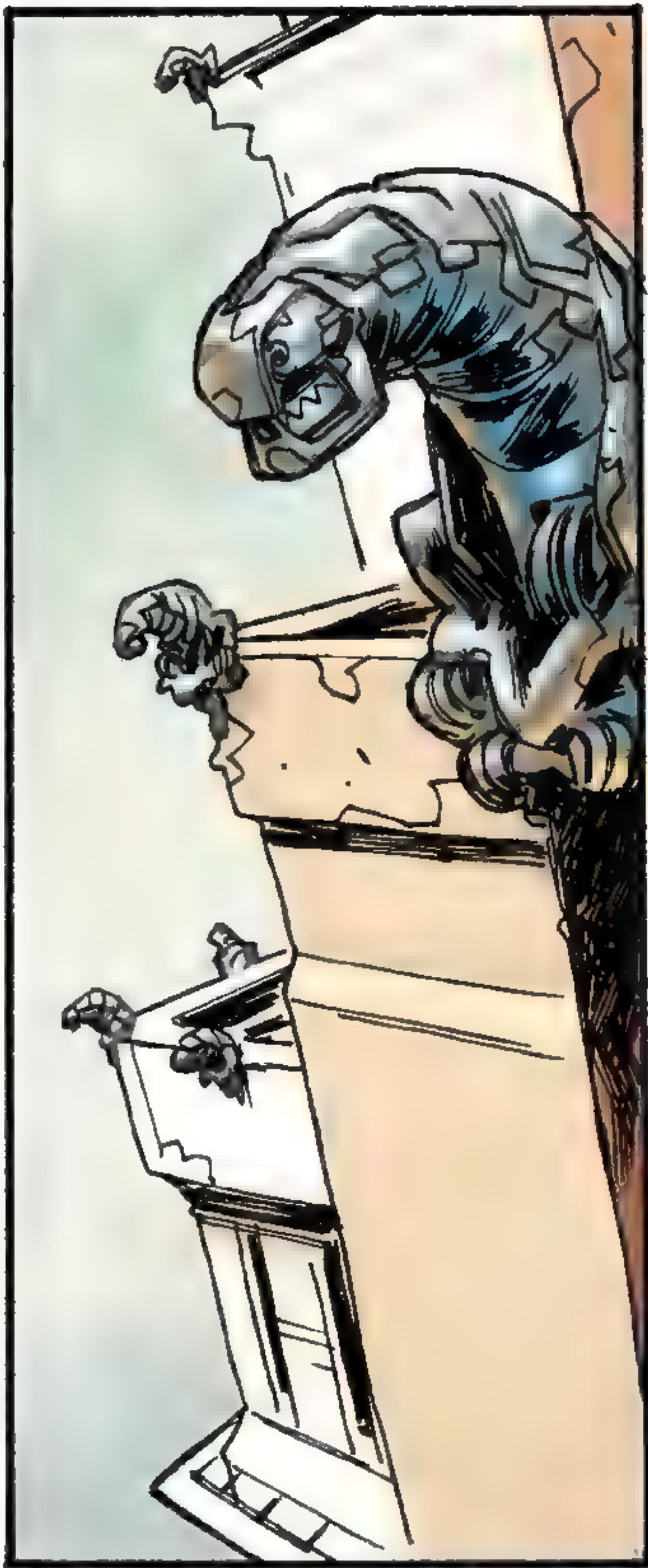
"...THAT MANKIND'S WORST
FOLLY CANNOT THREATEN.

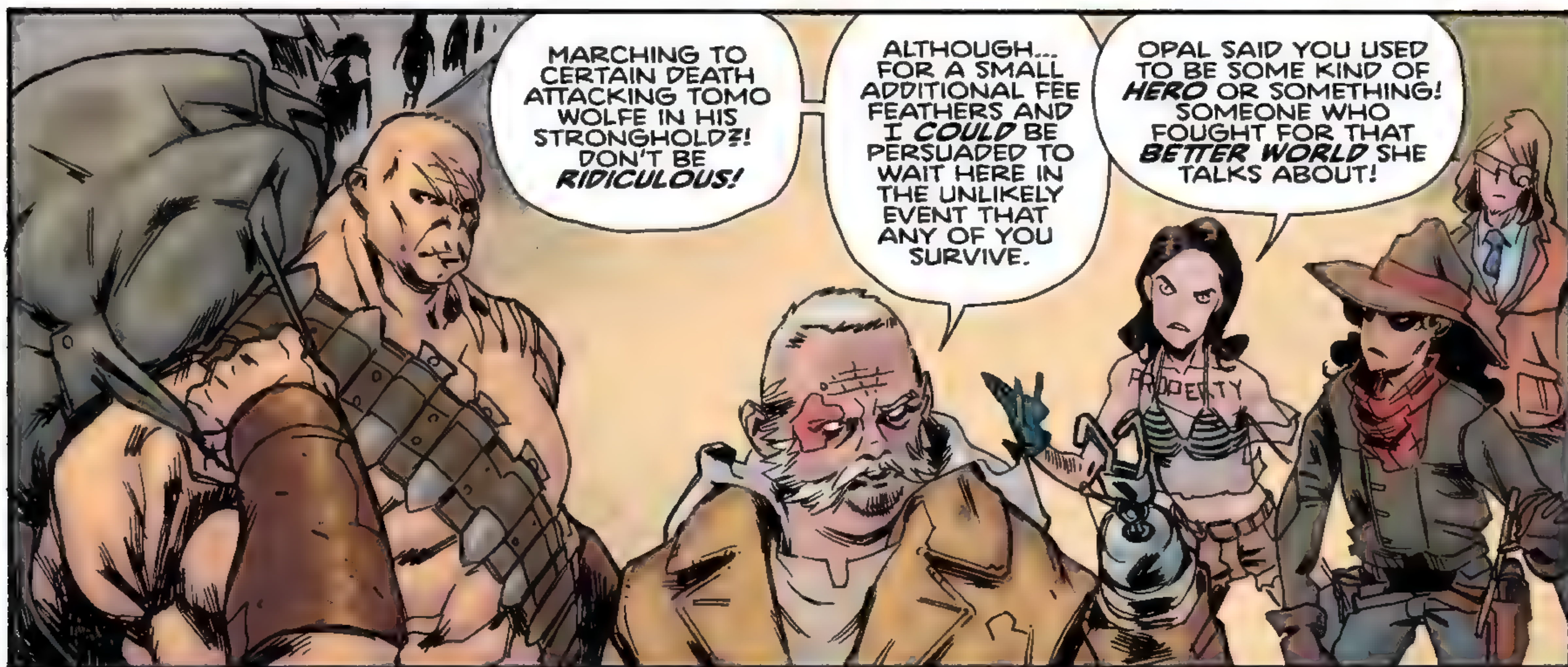


"ALL WE HAVE IS **NOW**. AND **RIGHT NOW** A NEW,
BETTER WORLD **IS** POSSIBLE. A WORLD FREE OF
SLAVERY AND EXPLOITATION. A WORLD WITHOUT
TYRANTS OR TORTURE OR POVERTY. A WORLD
OF EQUALITY, JUSTICE, AND FREEDOM.

"THERE ARE ONLY TWO MISTAKES
YOU CAN MAKE ON THE ROAD TO
THAT BETTER WORLD, ORCHID. NOT
GOING ALL THE WAY..."



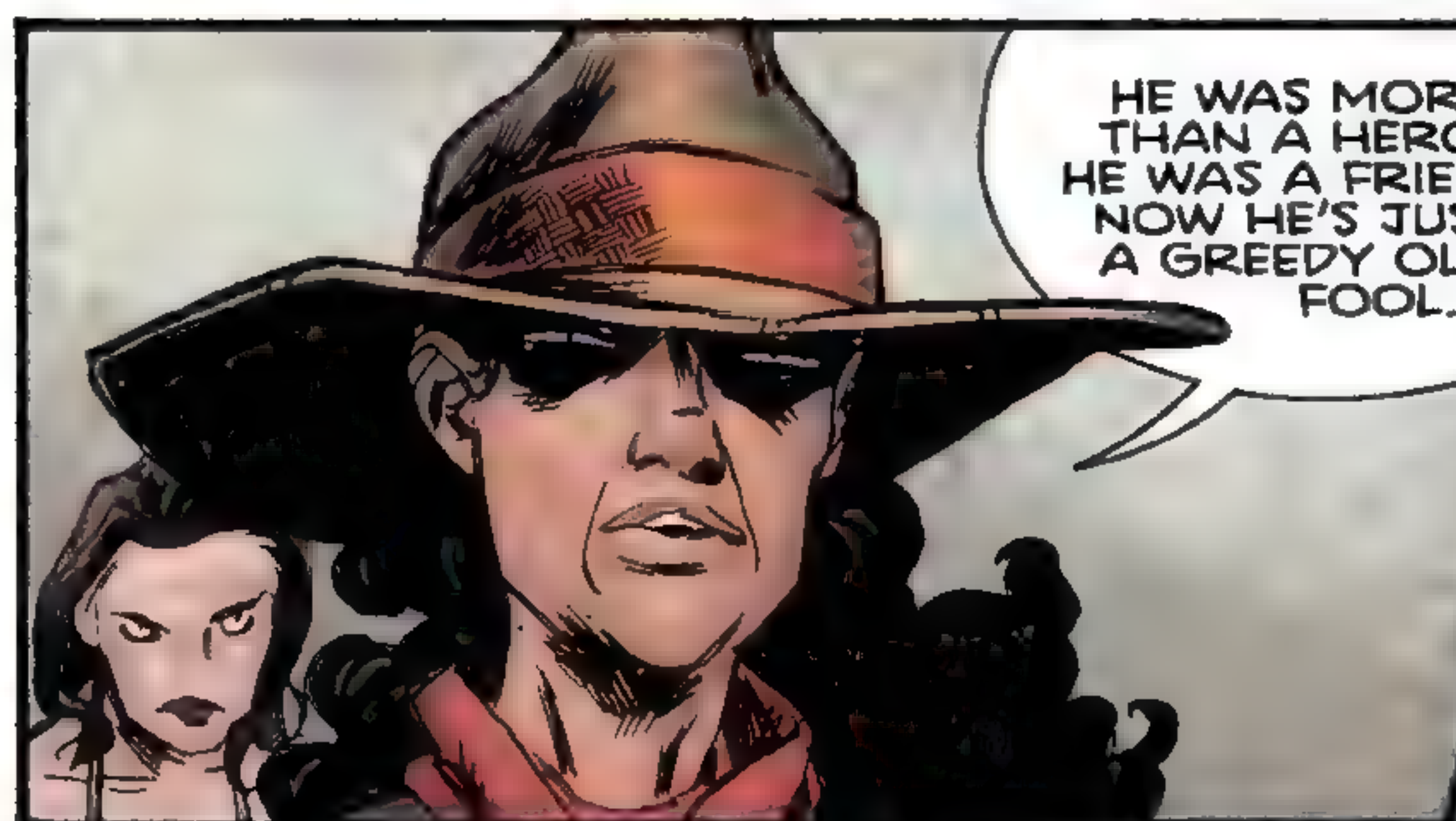




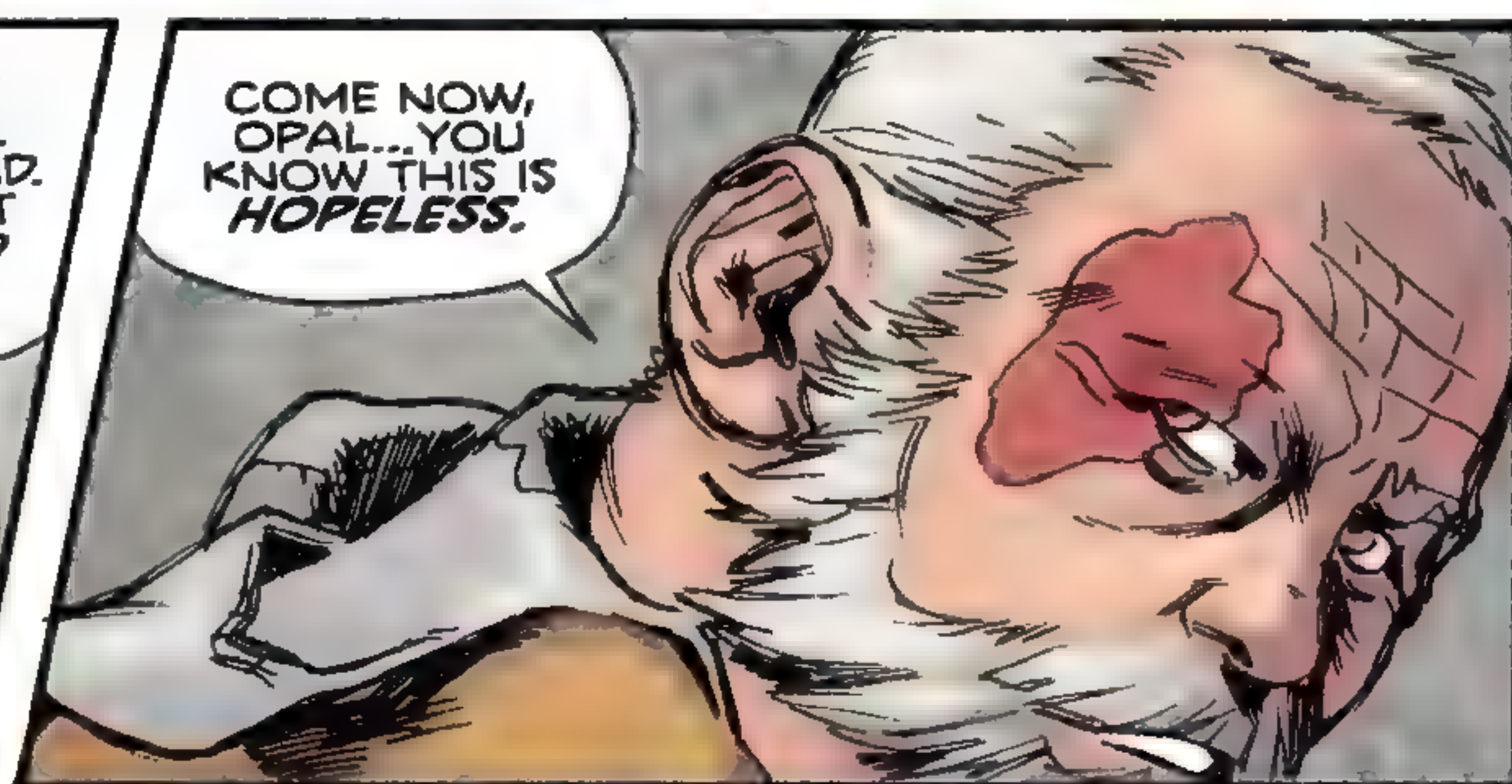
MARCHING TO CERTAIN DEATH ATTACKING TOMO WOLFE IN HIS STRONGHOLD?! DON'T BE **RIDICULOUS!**

ALTHOUGH... FOR A SMALL ADDITIONAL FEE FEATHERS AND I **COULD** BE PERSUADED TO WAIT HERE IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT THAT ANY OF YOU SURVIVE.

OPAL SAID YOU USED TO BE SOME KIND OF **HERO** OR SOMETHING! SOMEONE WHO FOUGHT FOR THAT **BETTER WORLD** SHE TALKS ABOUT!



HE WAS MORE THAN A HERO. HE WAS A FRIEND. NOW HE'S JUST A GREEDY OLD FOOL.

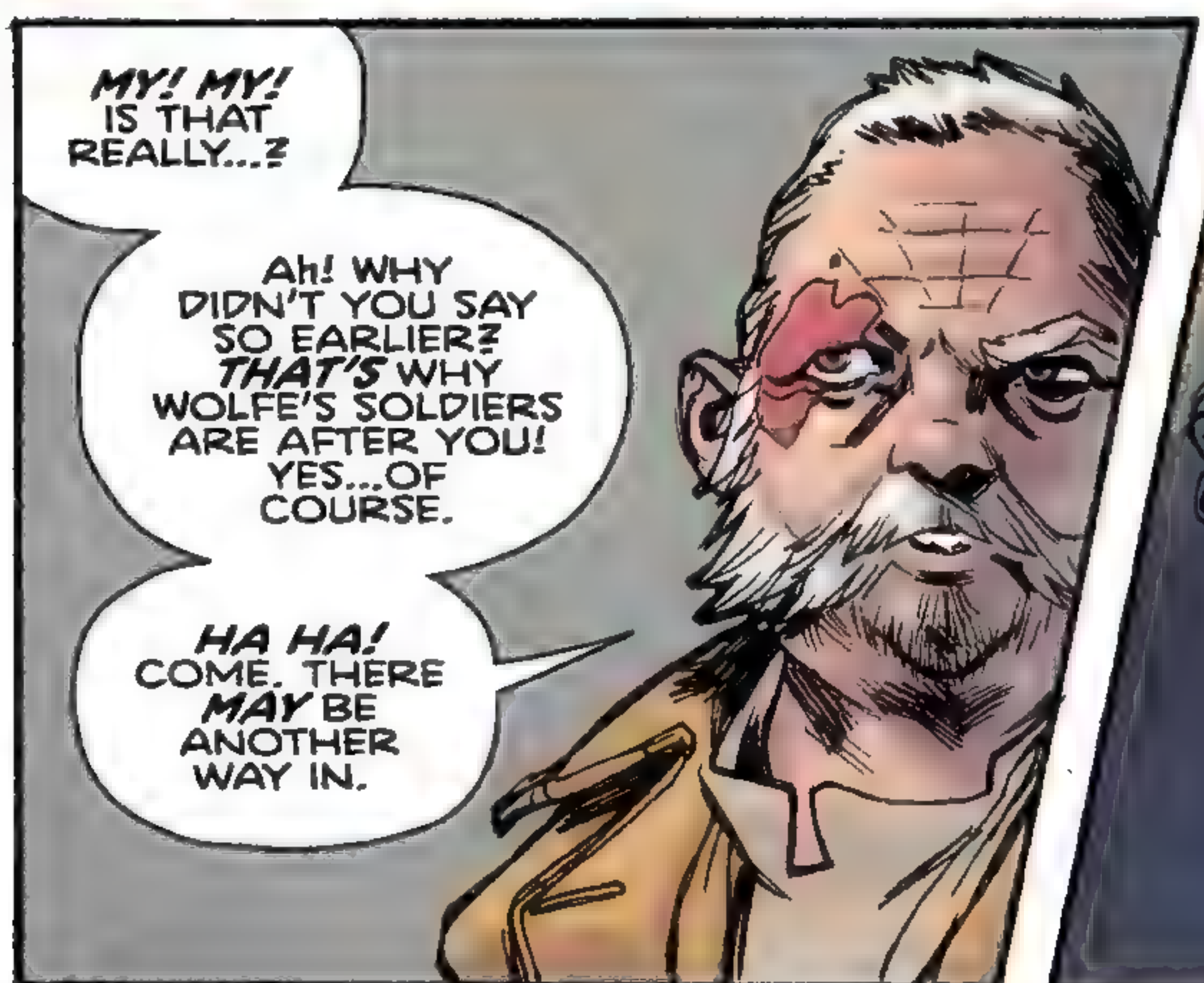


COME NOW, OPAL... YOU KNOW THIS IS **HOPELESS.**



NO, IT'S NOT.

WE HAVE **THIS**. BUT WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME!



MY! MY! IS THAT REALLY...?

AH! WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO EARLIER? **THAT'S** WHY WOLFE'S SOLDIERS ARE AFTER YOU! YES... OF COURSE.

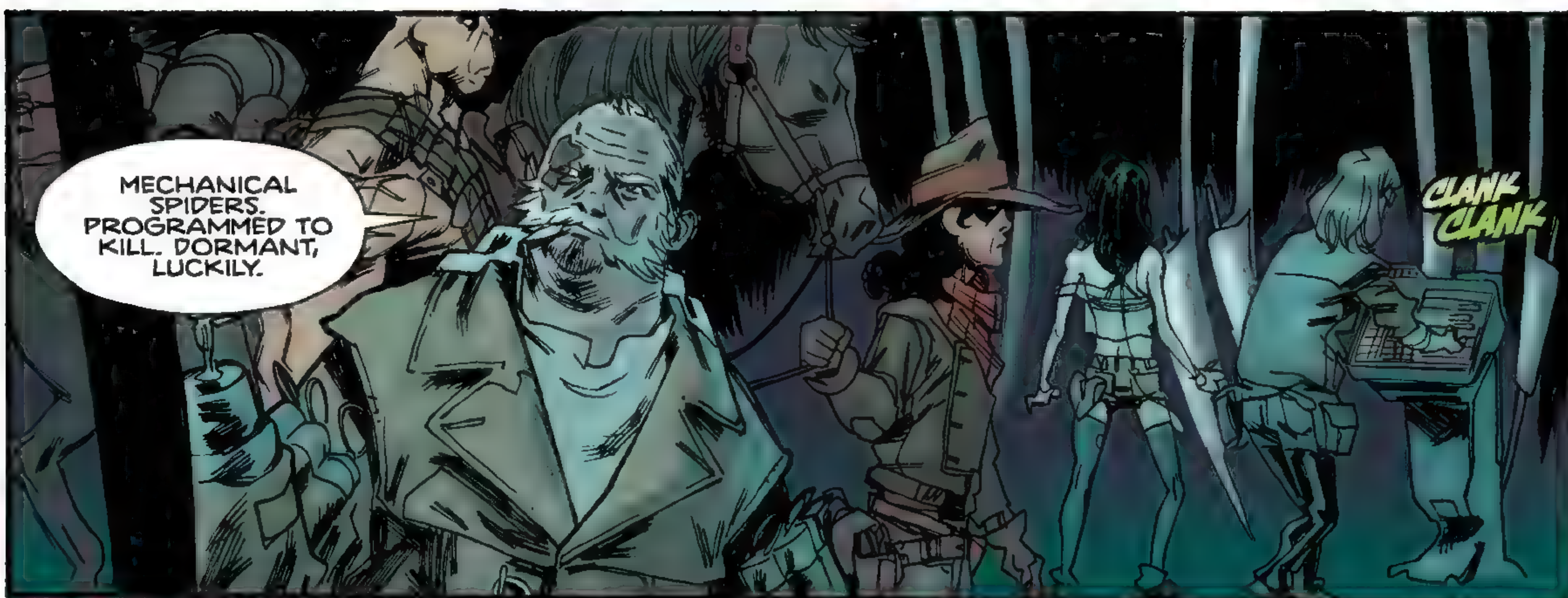
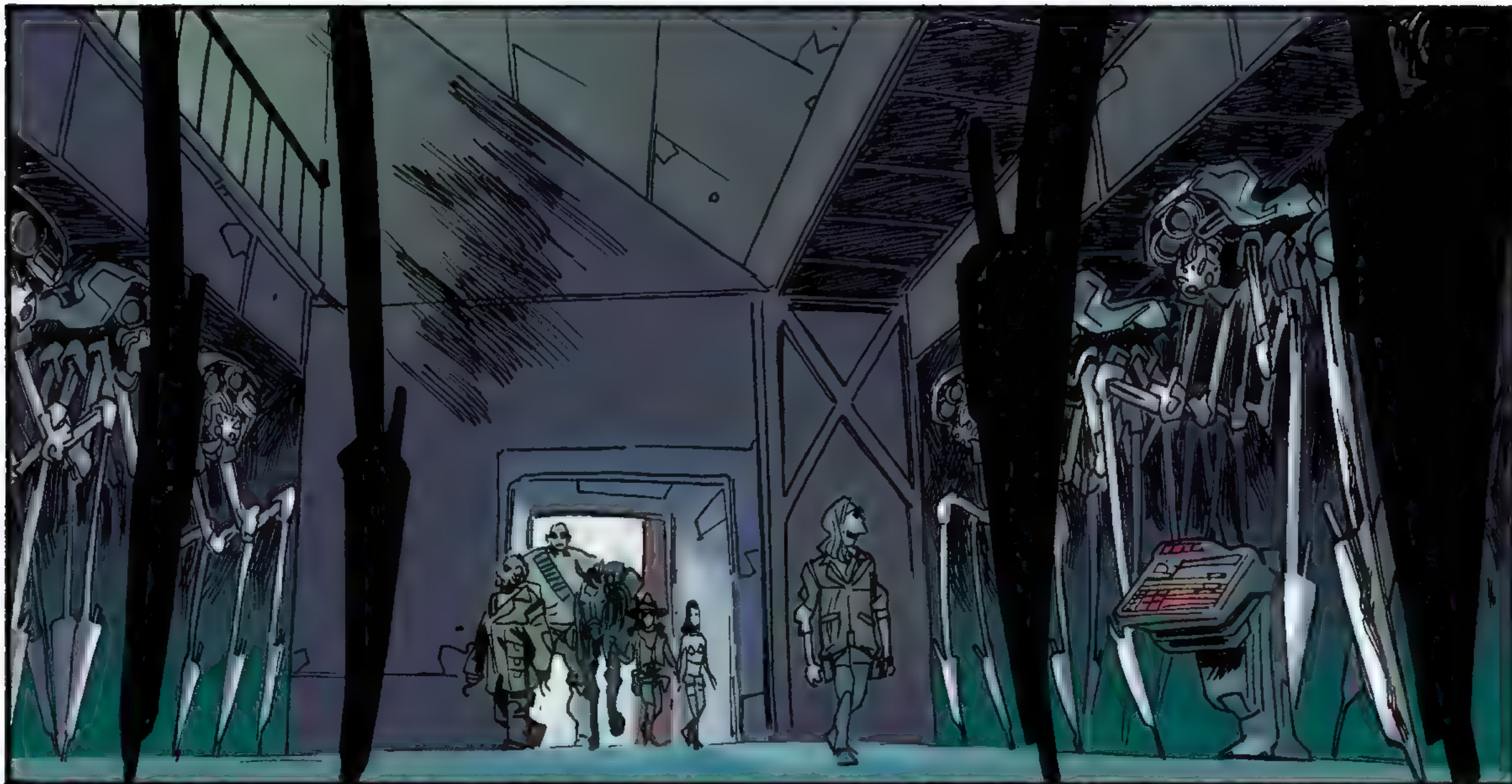
HA HA! COME, THERE **MAY** BE ANOTHER WAY IN.

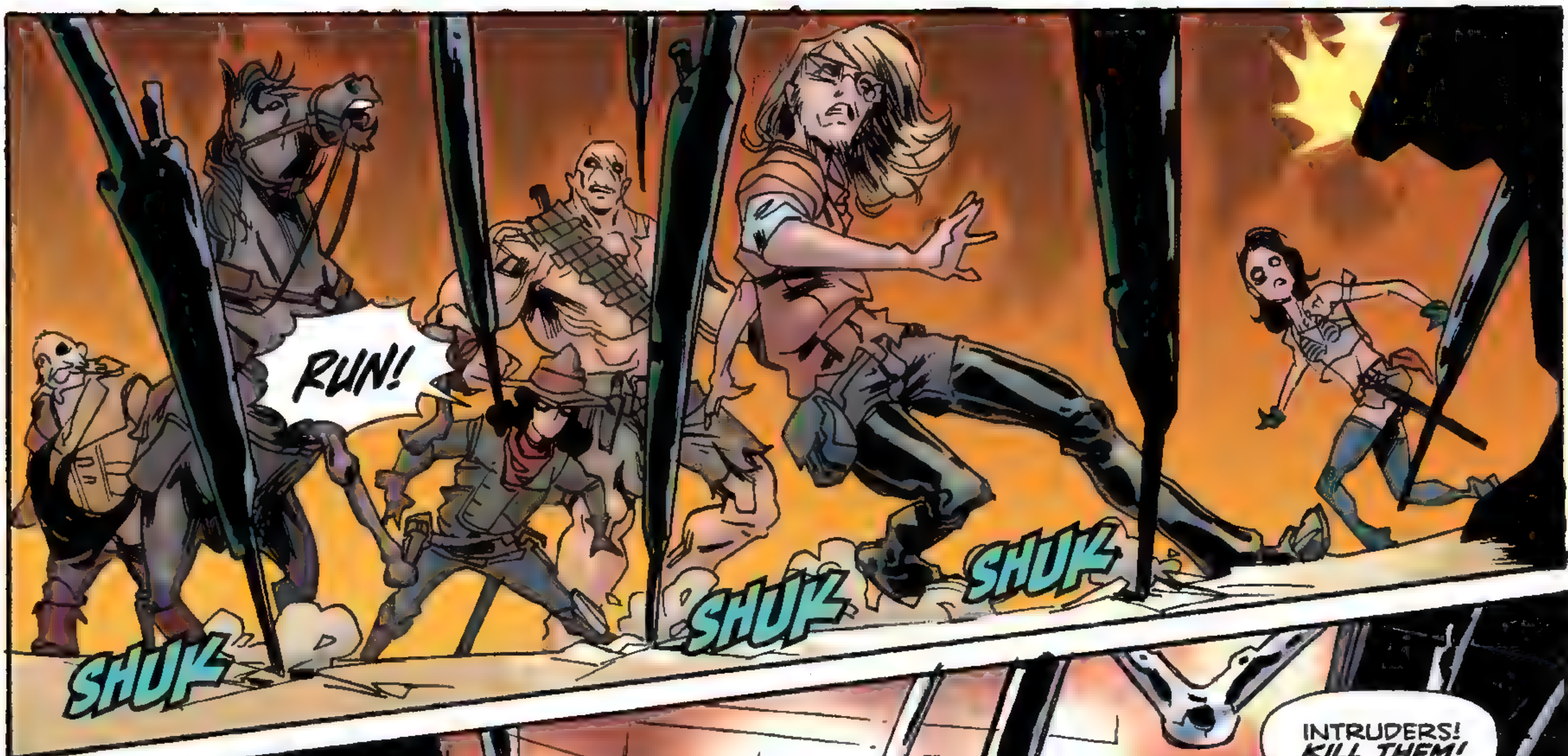


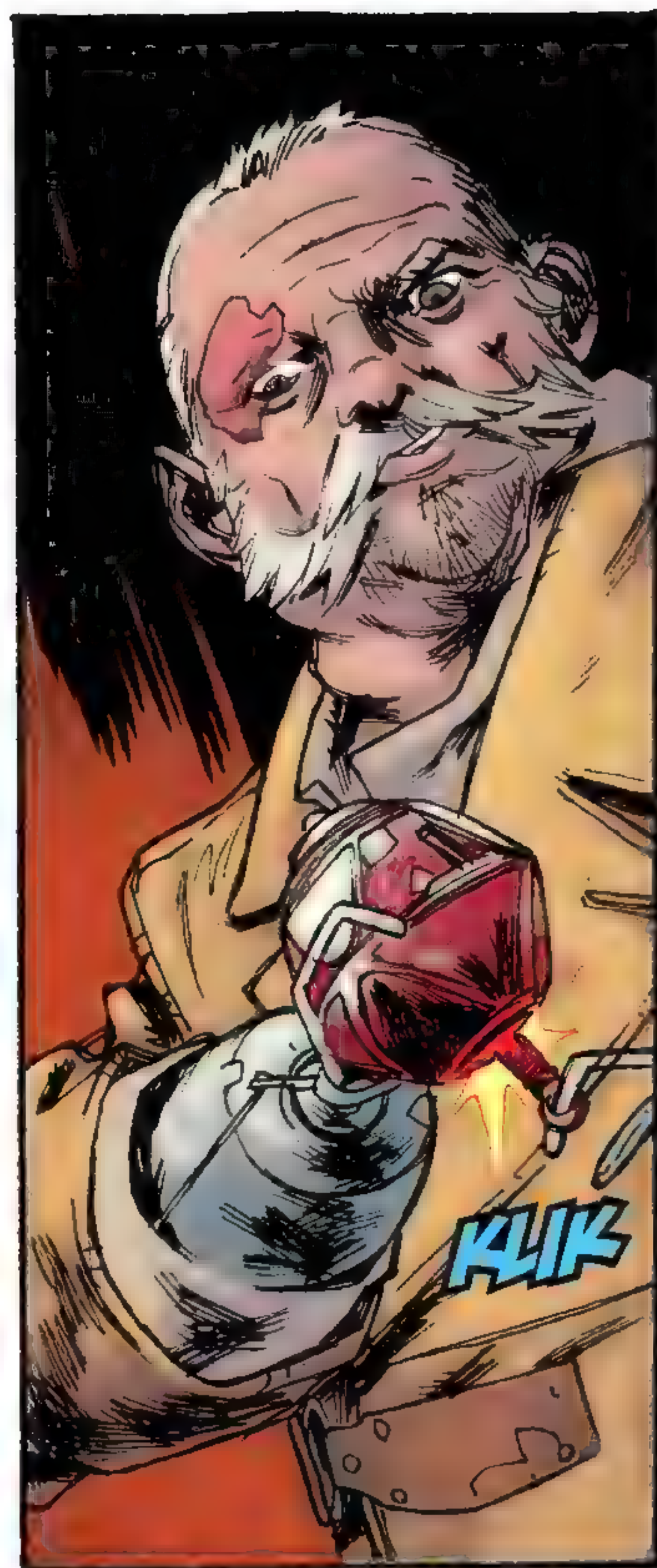
UTILITY ENTRANCE TO THE SPIDER STABLES. I HAVE MADE **DELIVERIES** HERE FROM TIME TO TIME.

REALLY, WE **MUST** HURRY!

PFFFT











Oh
DEAR.







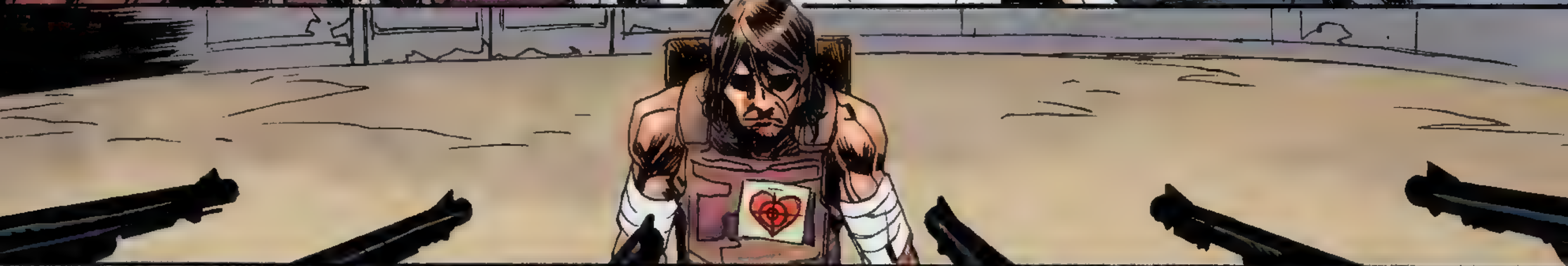
STADIA PENUEL

CITIZENS OF PENUEL! LOOK AROUND YOU! ARE WE NOT WELL FED WHILE OTHERS STARVE? ARE WE NOT SAFE WHILE OTHERS PERISH IN THE WILD? ARE WE NOT **CLEAN** AND **DRY** WHILE OTHERS SCROUNGE IN THE **WET** AND **FILTH**?

ARE WE NOT SERVED HAND AND FOOT WITH MERRY CHEER BY BRIDGE PEOPLE **LUCKY** ENOUGH TO FIND CONTENTMENT IN BONDAGE? AND ARE WE NOT PROTECTED BY THE BRAVEST AND MOST LETHAL FIGHTING FORCE THIS WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN?

TODAY, WE COMMEMORATE THE **EXTERMINATION** OF THE REBELLION AND CELEBRATE BRINGING TO **JUSTICE** ALL THOSE WHO HATE OUR FREEDOM AND THREATEN OUR WAY OF LIFE, OUR WEALTH, AND OUR PRIVILEGE!

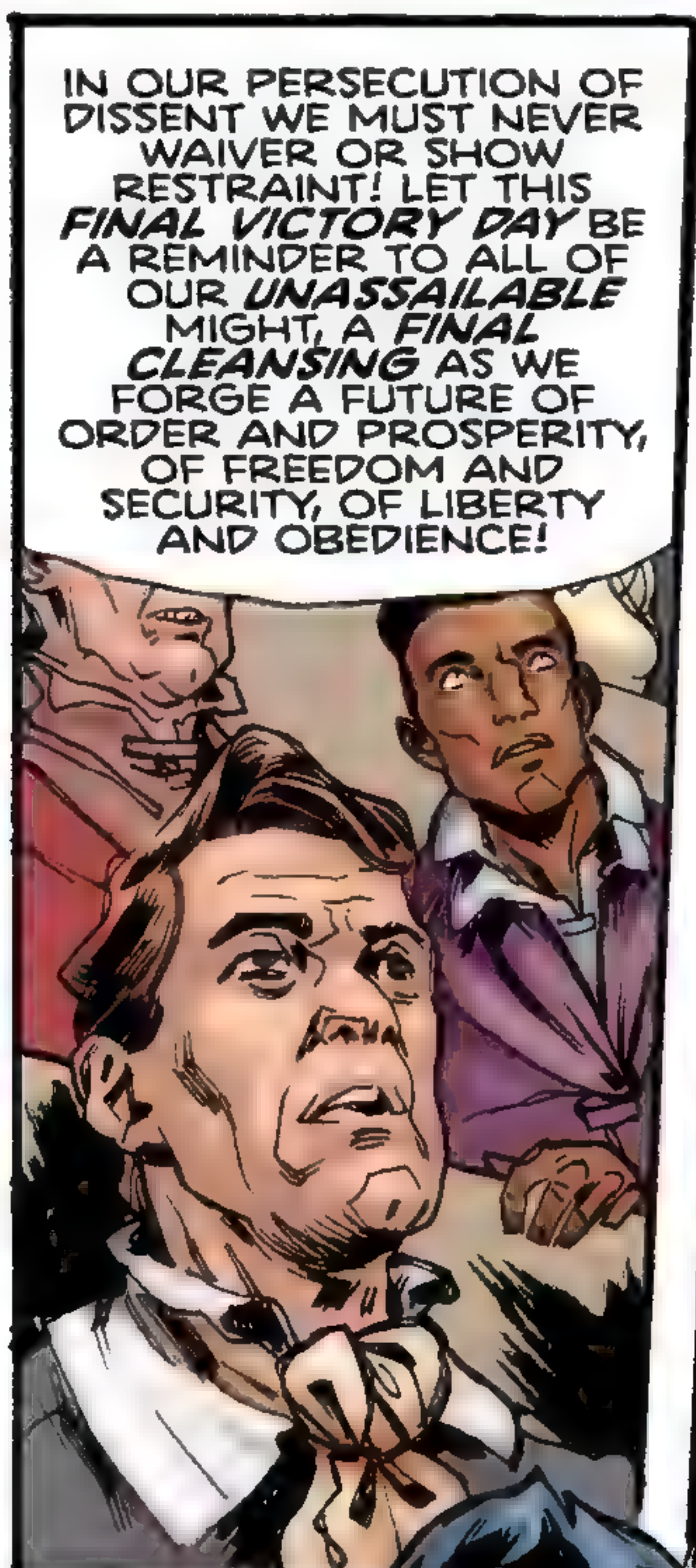
TODAY IS **FINAL VICTORY DAY**, THE ANNIVERSARY OF GENERAL CHINA'S **DEATH!**





ON THIS DAY, LONG AGO, I **WATCHED** GENERAL CHINA DIE! THROUGH FORTITUDE AND SACRIFICE WE PREVAILED AGAINST THE TERRORISTS AND THEIR VILE AIMS!

THEY BELIEVED THEY COULD DESTROY OUR RESOLVE AND FORCE OUR RETREAT! WITH TODAY'S EXECUTION OF THIS MURDERING TERRORIST, WE REJOICE IN THEIR UTTER FAILURE!



IN OUR PERSECUTION OF DISSENT WE MUST NEVER WAIVER OR SHOW RESTRAINT! LET THIS **FINAL VICTORY DAY** BE A REMINDER TO ALL OF OUR **UNASSAILABLE** MIGHT, A **FINAL CLEANSING** AS WE FORGE A FUTURE OF ORDER AND PROSPERITY, OF FREEDOM AND SECURITY, OF LIBERTY AND OBEDIENCE!



WHEN THE BULLETS REND THIS REBEL'S FLESH WE WILL USHER IN A NEW ERA OF **POWER** AND **PLENTRY**! UNCHECKED AND UNCHALLENGED!



NOW...THE MOMENT AT LAST! TAKE AIM, BRAVE SOLDIERS, LOYAL AND TRUE! UPON MY COMMAND...READY! AIM!



WHA...??







I MADE SOME VERY INTERESTING NEW FRIENDS AND WE'RE HERE TO RESCUE YOU! AND IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF, WE ARE **REALLY** MAKING PROGRESS...

Oh, DEAR SIMON, THANK YOU, MY FRIEND, BUT THERE'S NO ESCAPE FROM THIS PLACE...



KILL THEM ALL NOW! NOW! **NOW!**



LOOK!

I KNEW THIS WAS A MISTAKE.



GIVE ME THE MASK, SIMON.

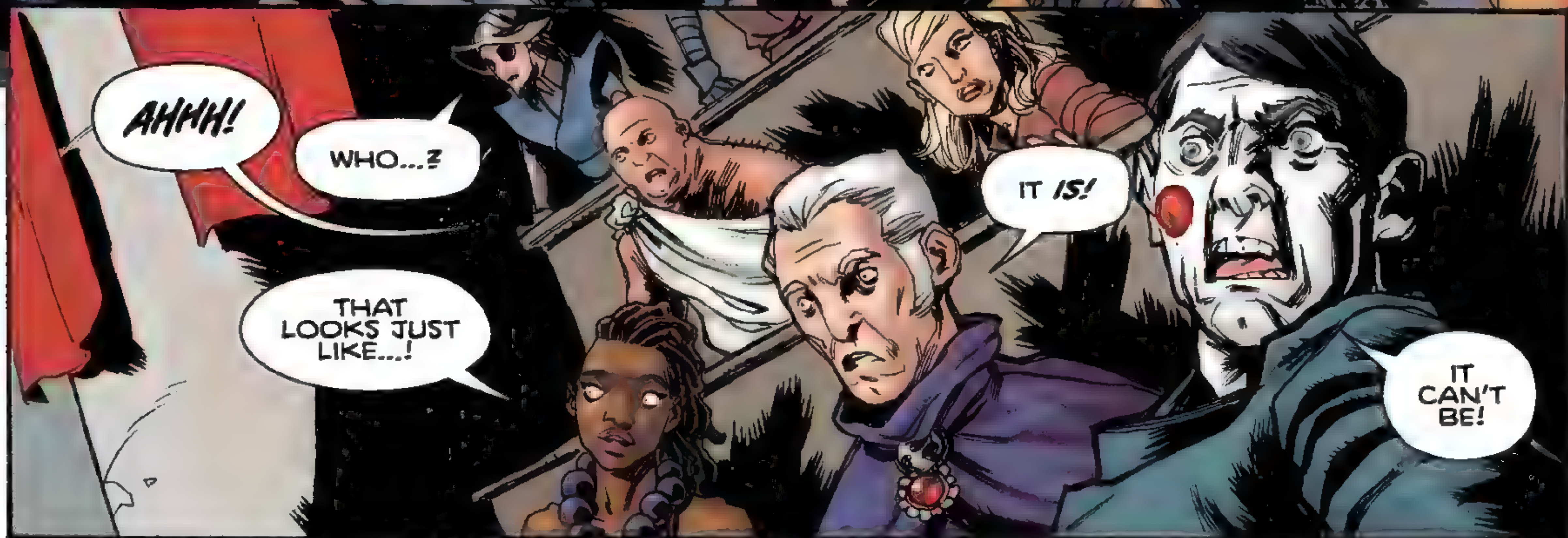


THE...THE... MASK? YOU WANT...? OKAY. Um, WELL, H-H-HERE.

OH! WHERE ARE MY MANNERS? ANZIO, MEET OPAL. OPAL, ANZIO.

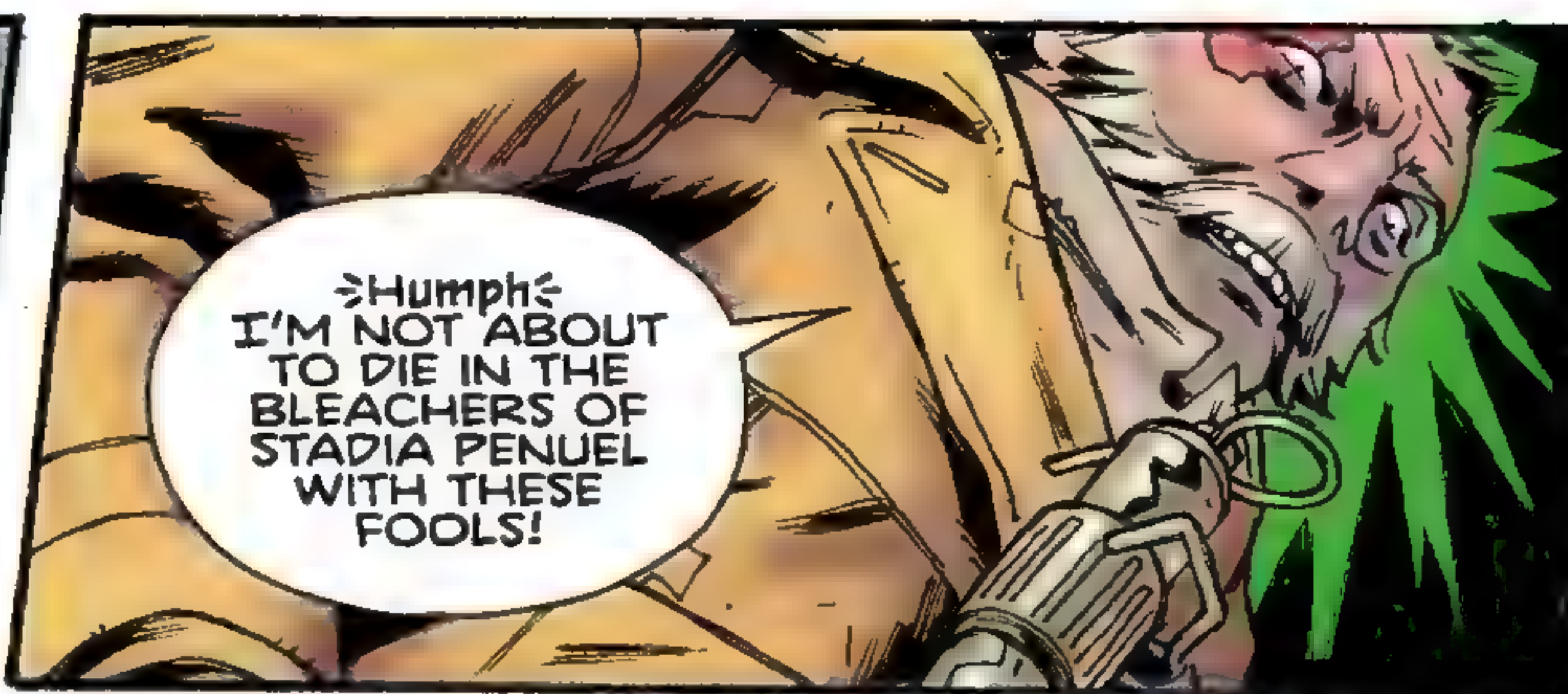


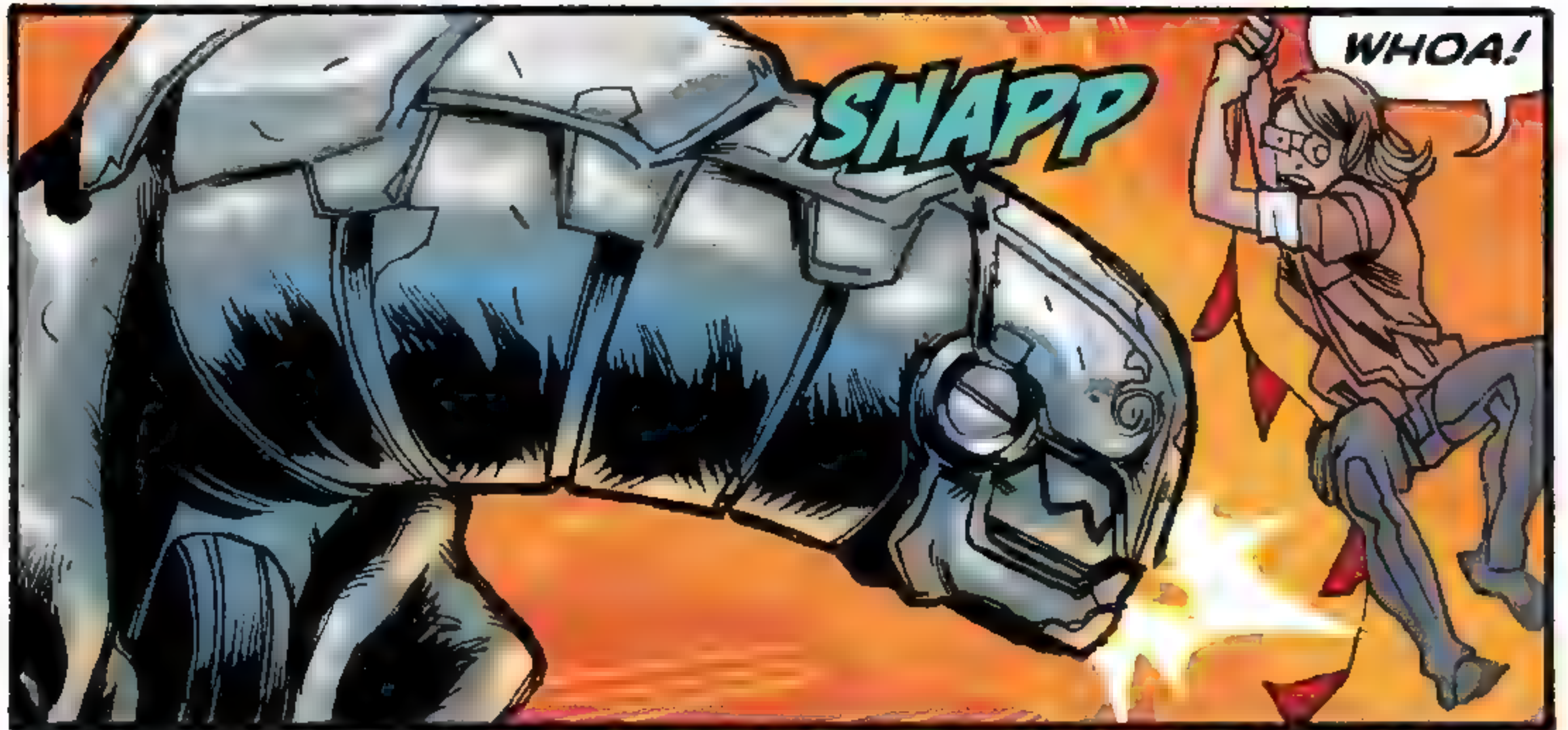
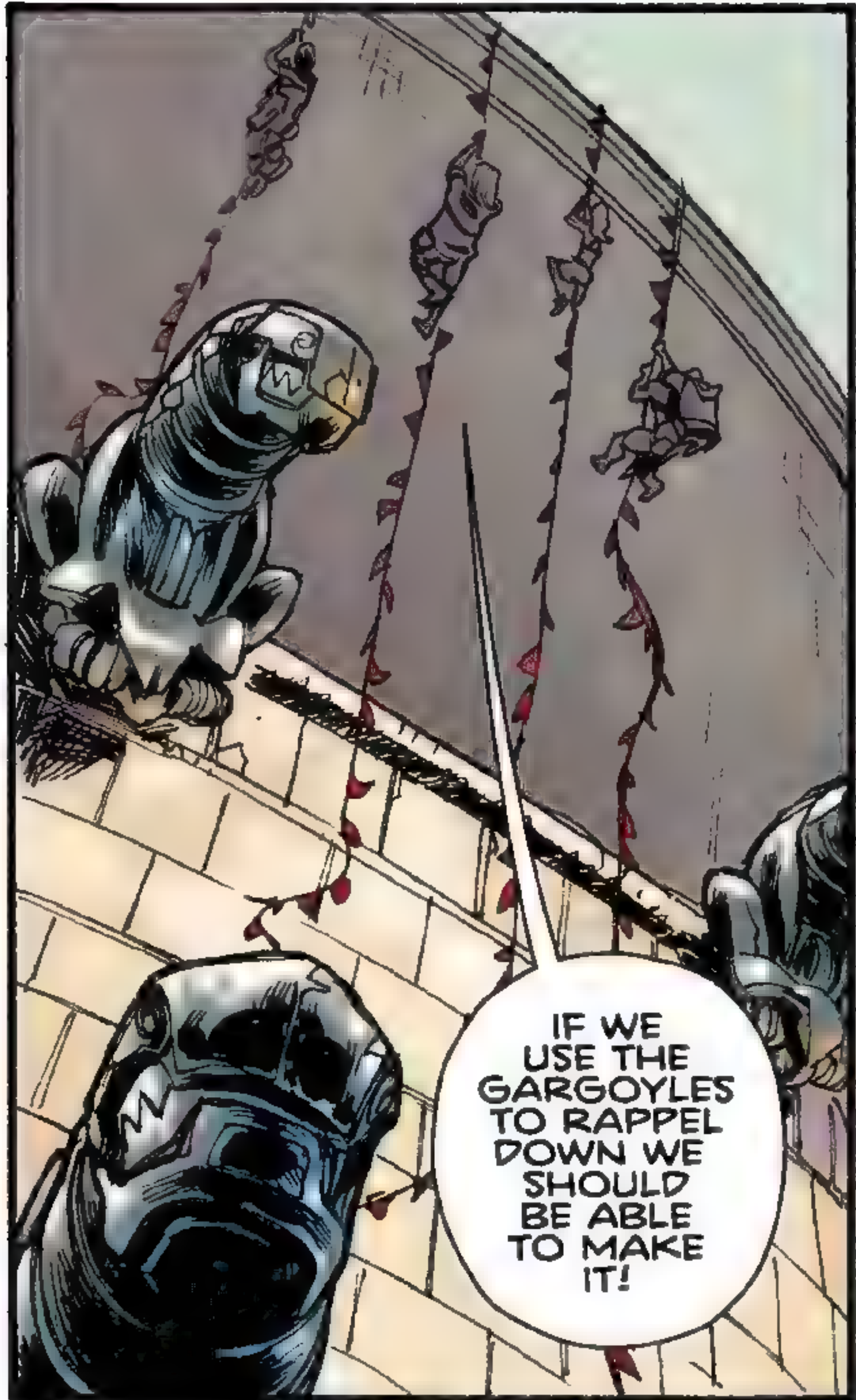
GOOD TO MEET YOU, ANZIO.

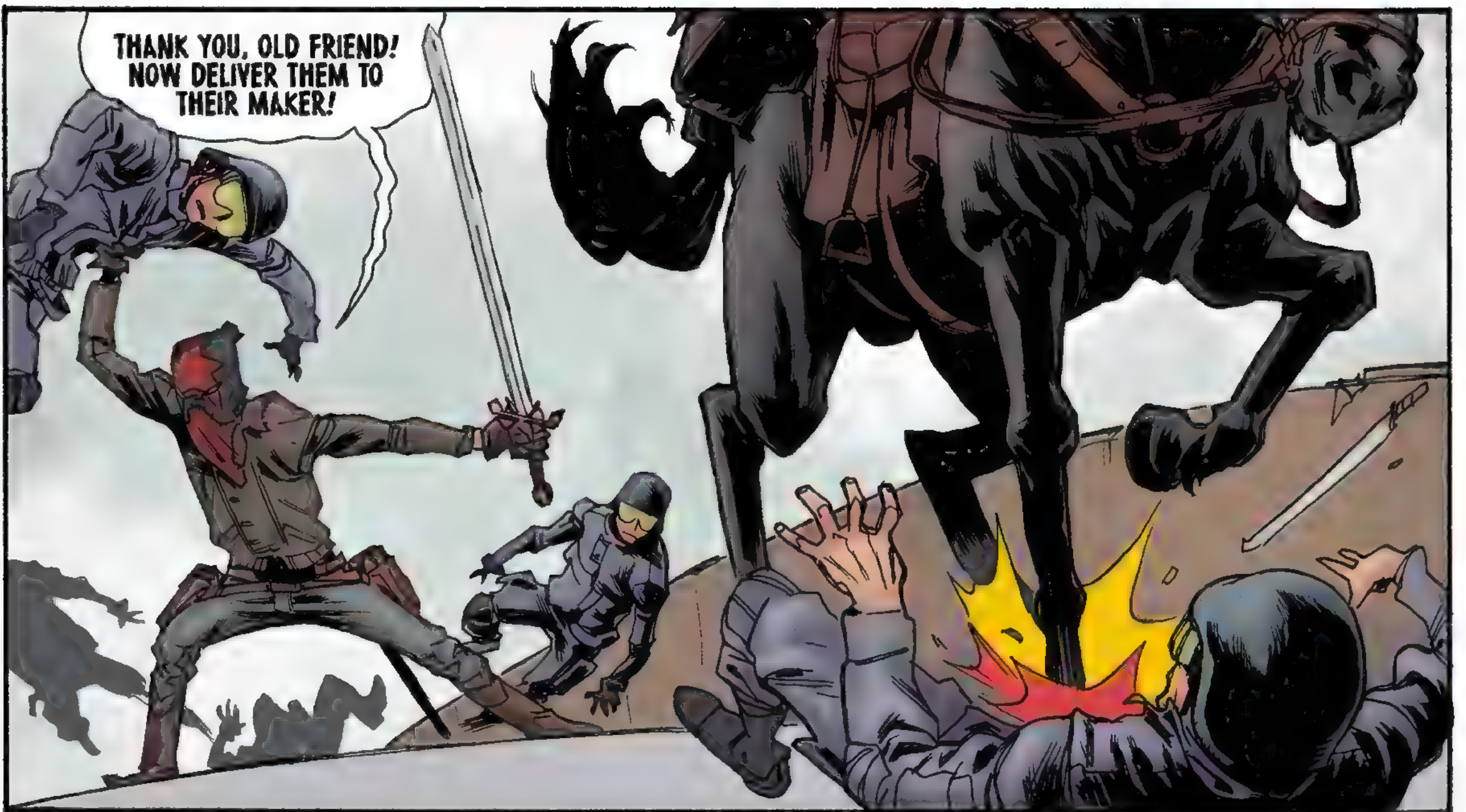






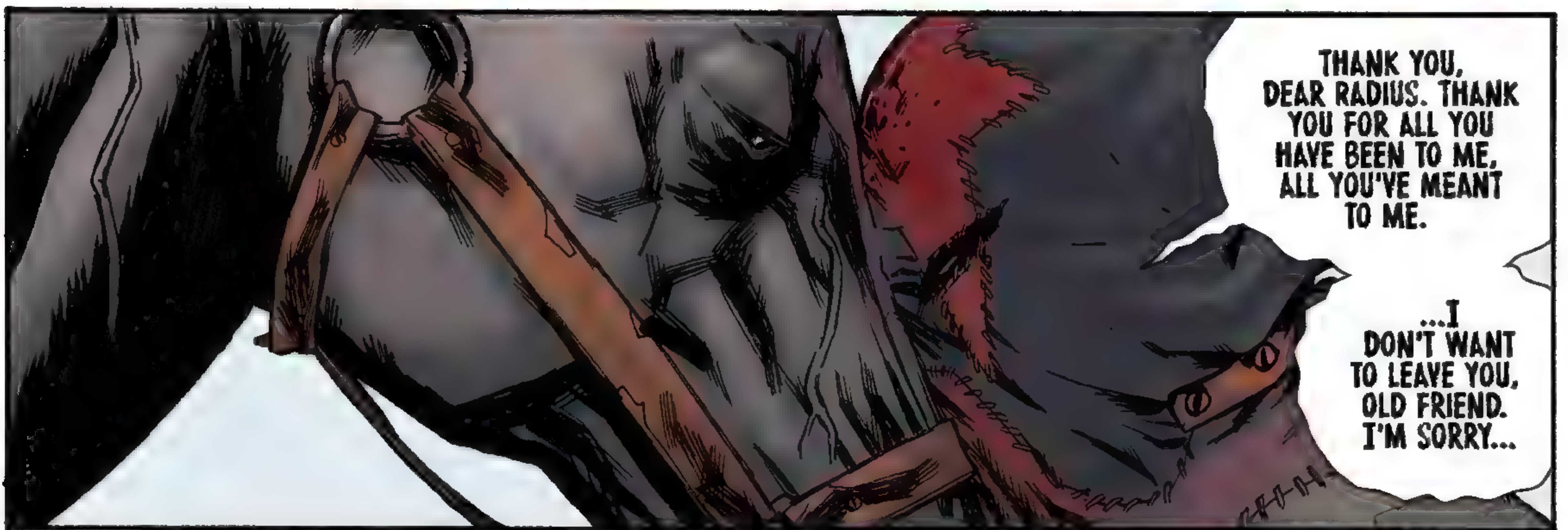
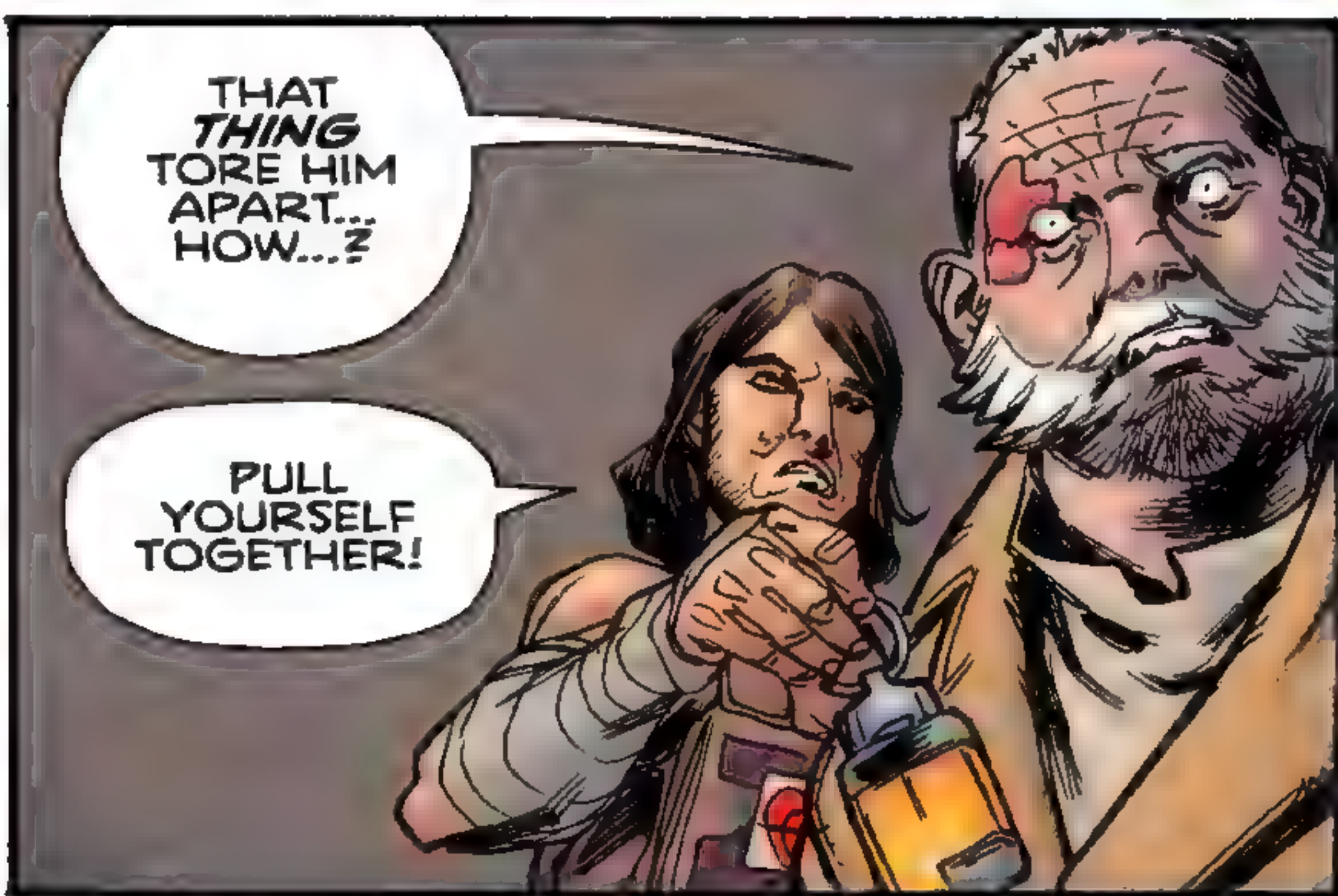


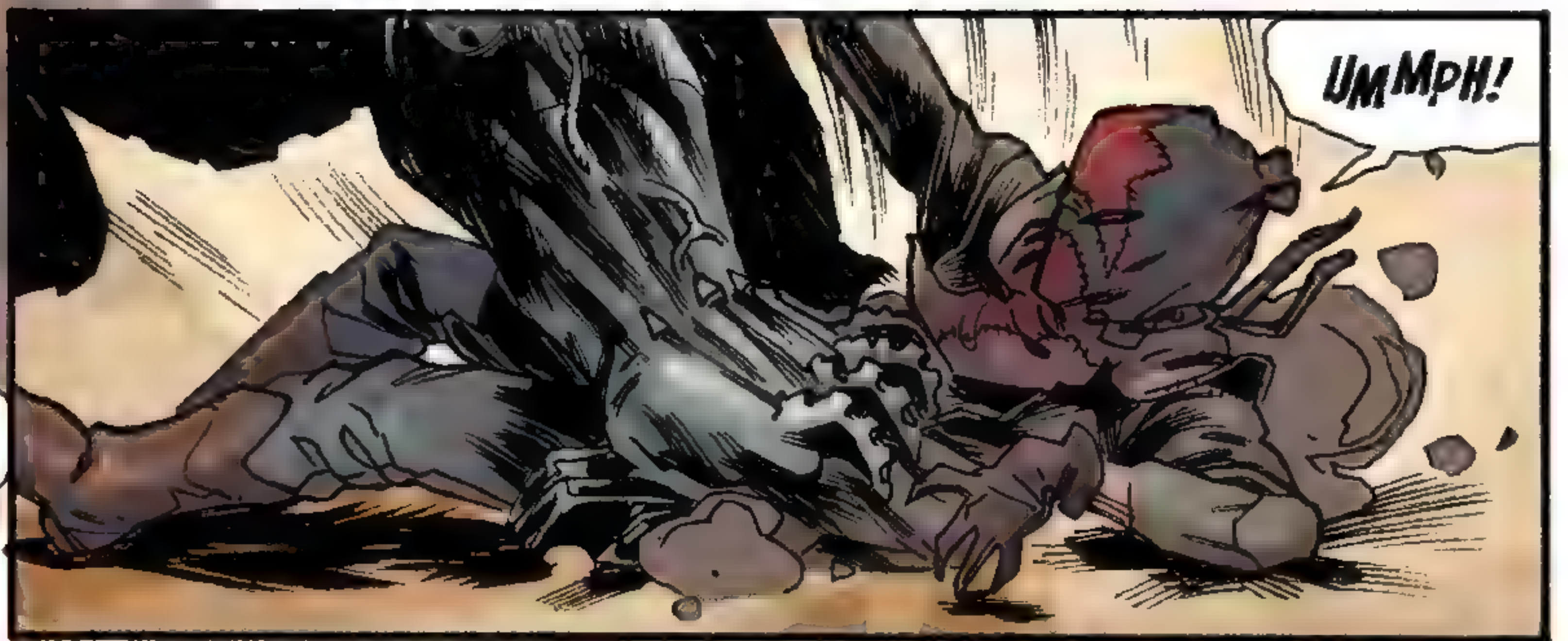
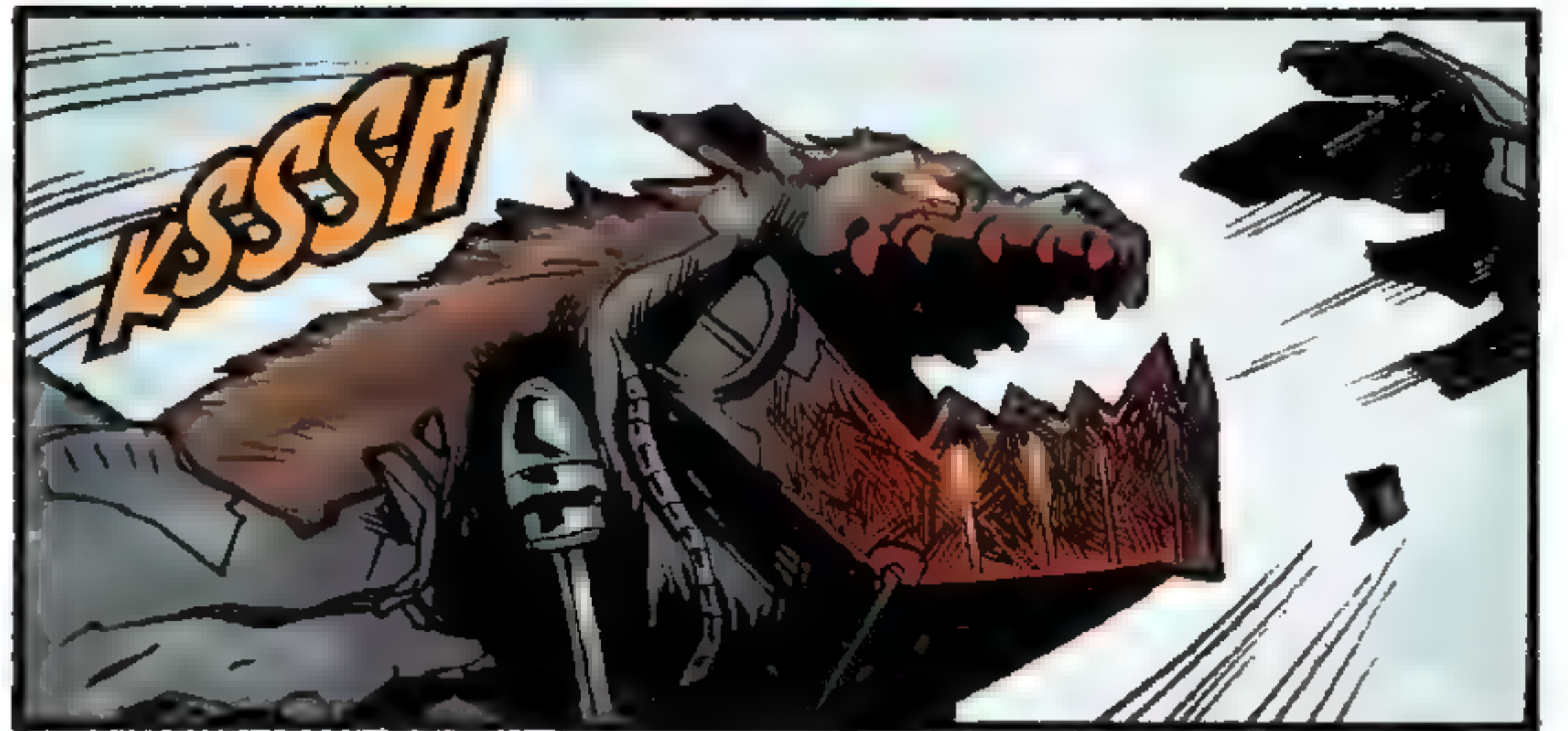
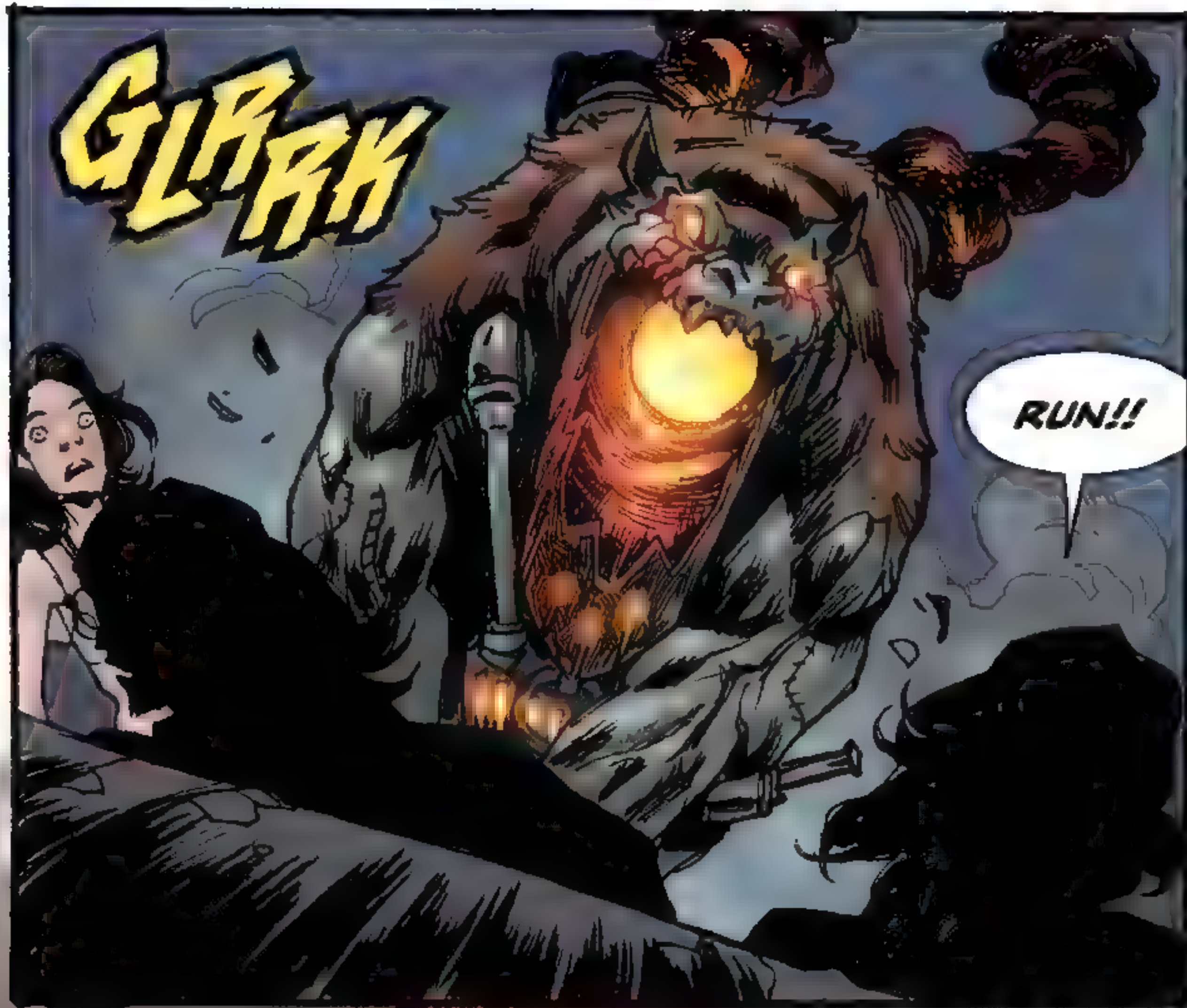


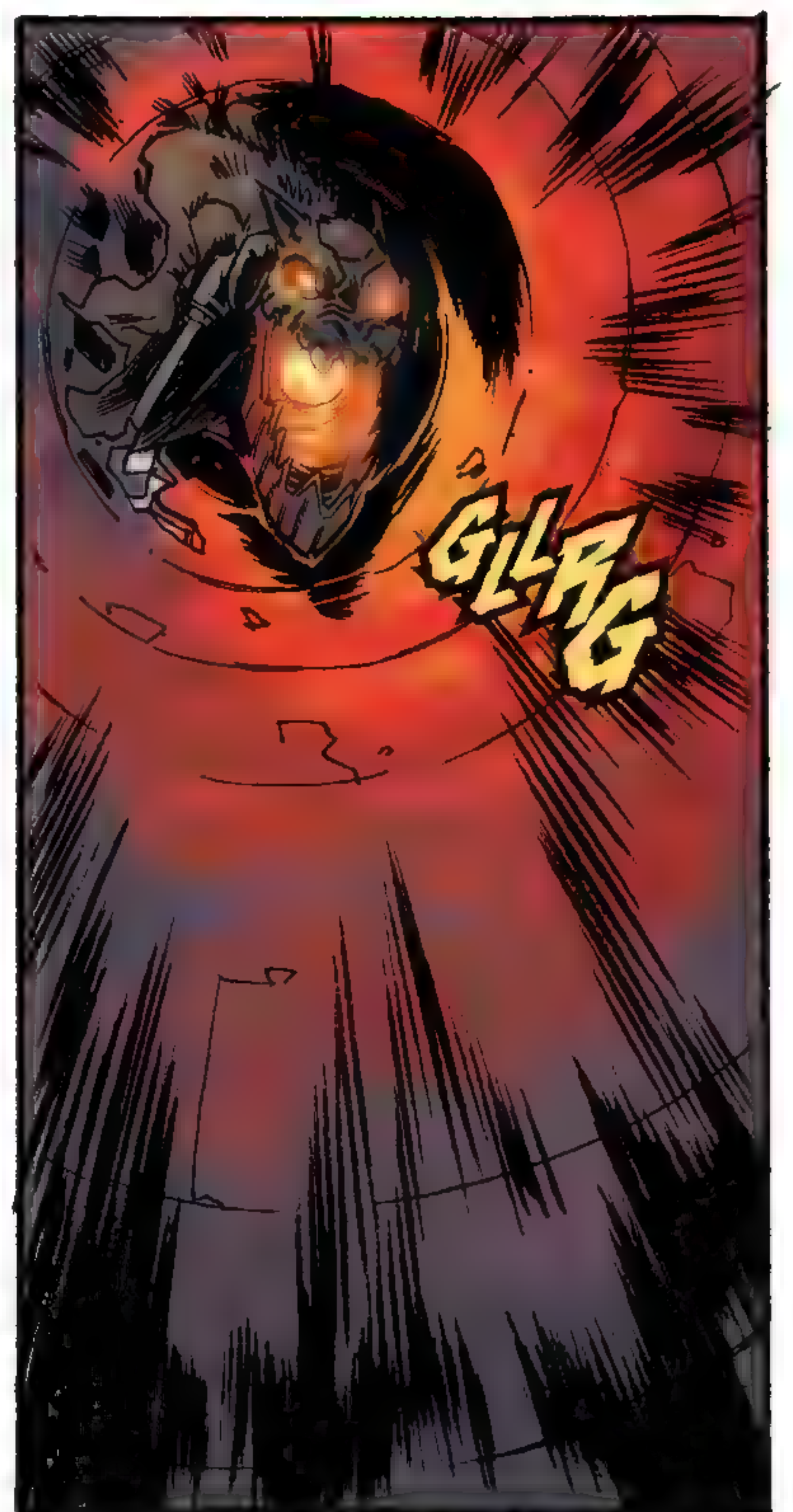












LISTEN...ALL OF YOU. I HAVE TO LEAVE YOU NOW AND I DON'T WANT ANY OF YOU TO FOLLOW. TRUST ME, THERE IS NOTHING ANY OF YOU COULD DO TO HELP. YOU HAVE ANZIO NOW AND...

WHAT?! YOU'RE BADLY HURT! OF COURSE WE CAN HELP YOU, WHATEVER YOU NEED...

ORCHID, YOU HAVE ALREADY HELPED ME MORE THAN YOU KNOW. BUT YOU CANNOT SAVE ME. WHAT LITTLE CHANCE THERE IS OF THAT...I MUST FIND OUT FOR MYSELF.

NO! WE'LL STAY HERE TILL YOU'RE BETTER AND...

ORCHID, I HAVE TO DO...WHAT I CAME HERE...TO... DO...??

OPAL!

SHE PASSED OUT!

I SAW IT WITH MY OWN EYES! GENERAL CHINA RUNNING **AMUCK** IN STADIA PENUEL! DOZENS, MAYBE **HUNDREDS** OF SOLDIERS WERE...

...SLAUGHTERED LIKE ANTS! AND IT WAS **SURELY** THE LEGENDARY MASK. THEY SAY THAT TOMO WOLFE HIMSELF...

...WAS SPEECHLESS AS THE REBEL PRISONER ESCAPED AND **THE GHOST OF GENERAL CHINA** FLEW OUT OF THE STADIUM AND **DISAPPEARED!**

THANK YOU, MY DEAR FRIEND. YOUR PRESENCE IS ALWAYS A GREAT COMFORT.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TRICKERY IS AFOOT, BUT THAT WAS **NOT** A SUPERNATURAL SPECTER IN THE STADIUM TODAY. JUST THE **IDEA** THAT SOMEONE WOULD **DARE...**

I HAVE COME **TOO FAR** TO HAVE **MY DAY** MARRIED BY SOME CHARLATAN IN A PAINTED HOOD!



"FOR I WAS CONCEIVED
IN THE RAPE CHAMBERS OF A
DERELICT CANNIBAL BARGE."

YOU MAY
TAKE YOUR PICK,
GENTLEMEN...

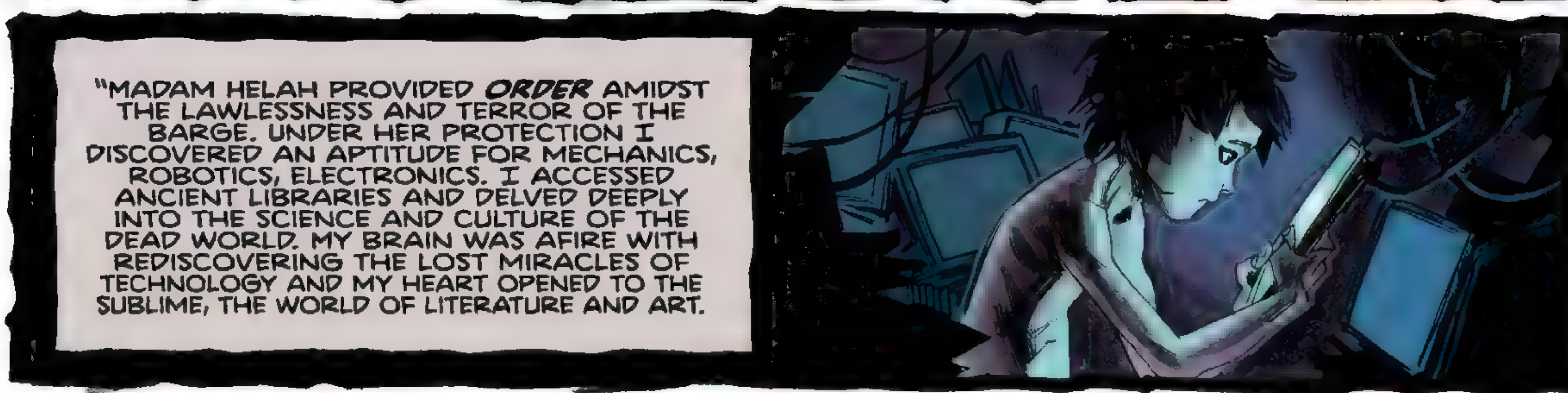


"AND RAISED IN THE
BABY FARMS WHERE THE
CHILDREN ARE FATTENED
BEFORE SLAUGHTER."

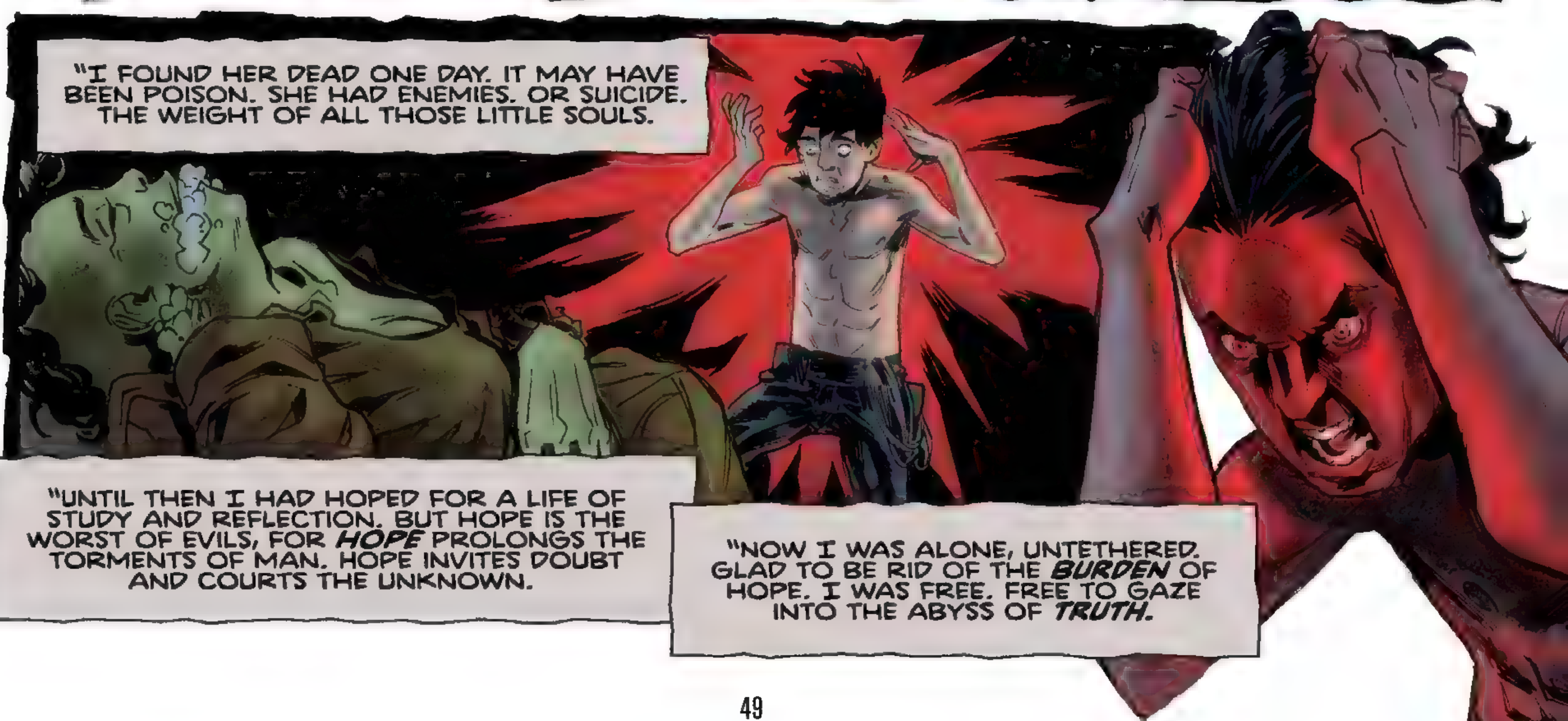
"THAT IS WHERE I
CAUGHT THE EYE OF
MADAM HELAH."



Sha-ha! THIS ONE KEEPS
ESCAPING FROM HIS BIN!
EXCELLENT SURVIVAL
INSTINCTS, CHILD! EXCELLENT!




"MADAM HELAH PROVIDED **ORDER** AMIDST
THE LAWLESSNESS AND TERROR OF THE
BARGE. UNDER HER PROTECTION I
DISCOVERED AN APTITUDE FOR MECHANICS,
ROBOTICS, ELECTRONICS. I ACCESSED
ANCIENT LIBRARIES AND DELVED DEEPLY
INTO THE SCIENCE AND CULTURE OF THE
DEAD WORLD. MY BRAIN WAS AFIRE WITH
REDISCOVERING THE LOST MIRACLES OF
TECHNOLOGY AND MY HEART OPENED TO THE
SUBLIME, THE WORLD OF LITERATURE AND ART."




"I FOUND HER DEAD ONE DAY. IT MAY HAVE
BEEN POISON. SHE HAD ENEMIES. OR SUICIDE.
THE WEIGHT OF ALL THOSE LITTLE SOULS."

"UNTIL THEN I HAD HOPED FOR A LIFE OF
STUDY AND REFLECTION. BUT HOPE IS THE
WORST OF EVILS, FOR **HOPE** PROLONGS THE
TORMENTS OF MAN. HOPE INVITES DOUBT
AND COURTS THE UNKNOWN."

"NOW I WAS ALONE, UNTETHERED.
GLAD TO BE RID OF THE **BURDEN** OF
HOPE. I WAS FREE. FREE TO GAZE
INTO THE ABYSS OF **TRUTH**."




"BUT IF YOU GAZE FOR
LONG INTO AN ABYSS, THE
ABYSS ALSO GAZES INTO YOU."



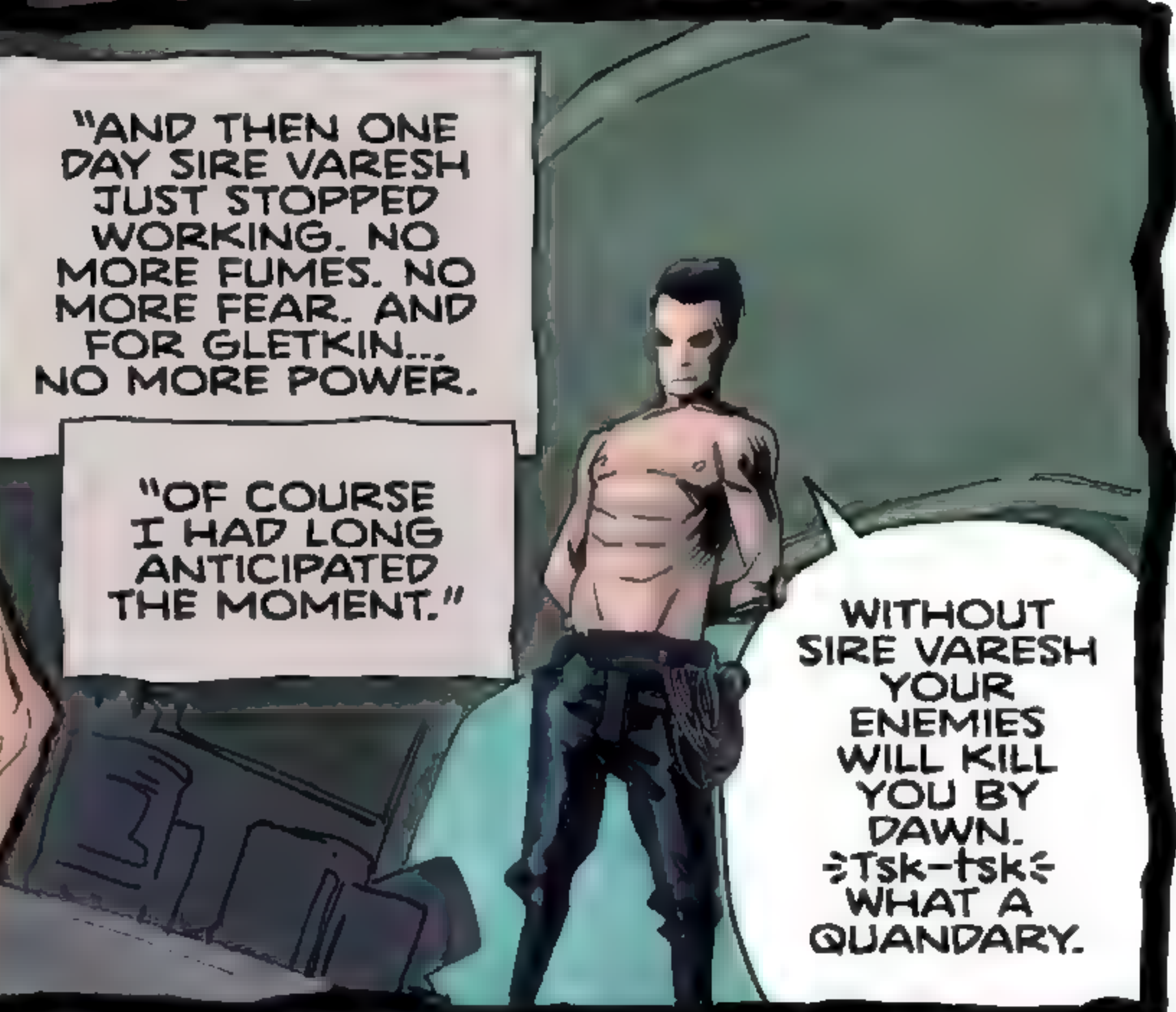
"I QUICKLY ROSE TO THE ROLE OF ATTACHÉ
DEFENSE MINISTER TO THE BARGE MASTER.
GLETKIN. A RESOURCEFUL BRUTE IN HIS YOUTH."

"GLETKIN
MAINTAINED
POWER
THROUGH
FEAR. FEAR
OF A
TERRIFYING
KILLING
MACHINE--A
HUGE, OIL-
COVERED
MONSTROSITY
OF RETRO
TECHNOLOGY.
SIRE VARESH."



"AND THEN ONE
DAY SIRE VARESH
JUST STOPPED
WORKING. NO
MORE FUMES. NO
MORE FEAR. AND
FOR GLETKIN...
NO MORE POWER."

"OF COURSE
I HAD LONG
ANTICIPATED
THE MOMENT."



WITHOUT
SIRE VARESH
YOUR
ENEMIES
WILL KILL
YOU BY
DAWN.
≡tsk-tsk≡
WHAT A
QUANDARY."



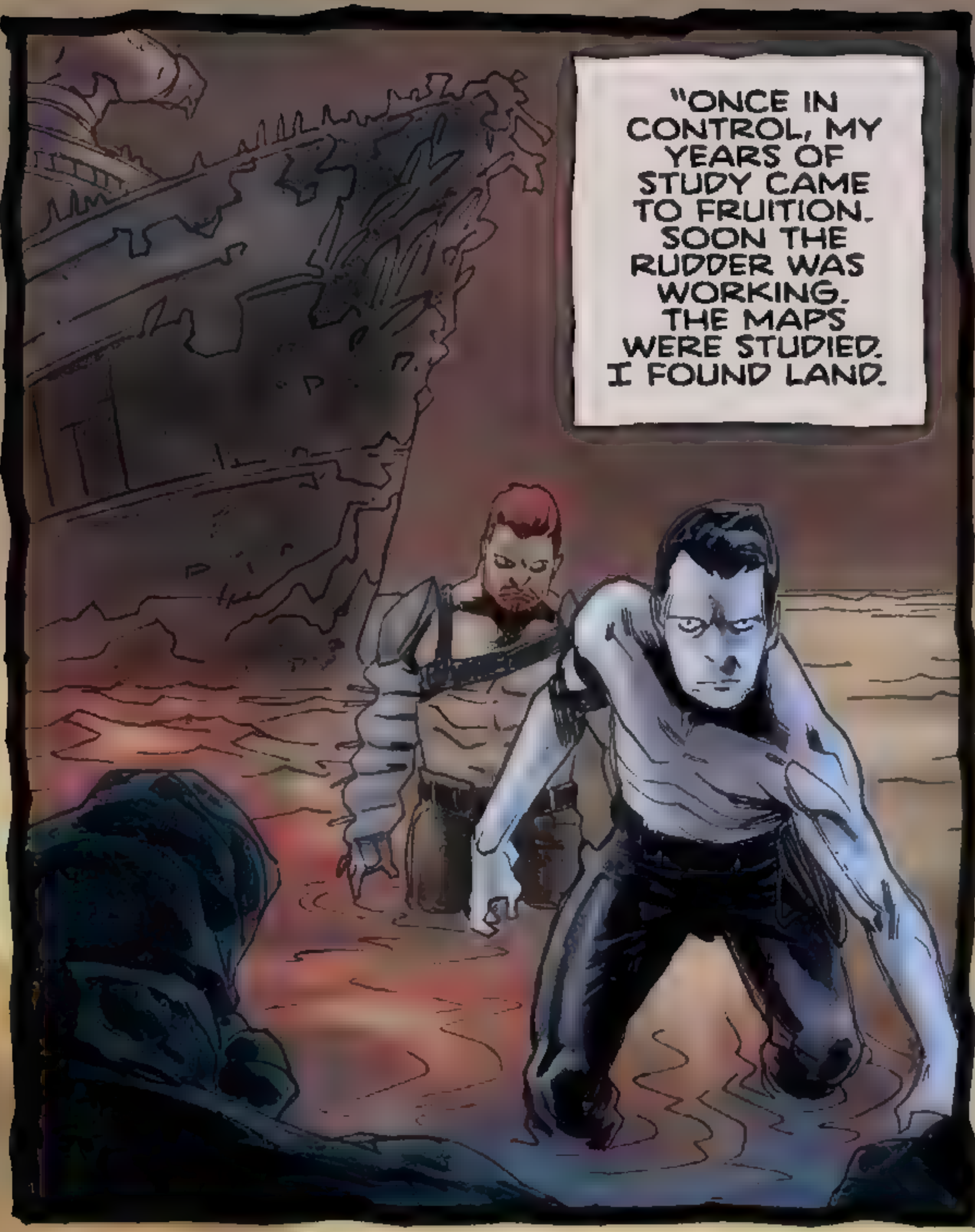
I CAN FIX
YOUR MONSTER.
I CAN KEEP IT
RUNNING. MAKE
THEM AFRAID
AGAIN. BUT
THERE'S ONE
CONDITION.

YOU
WORK
FOR *ME*
NOW.

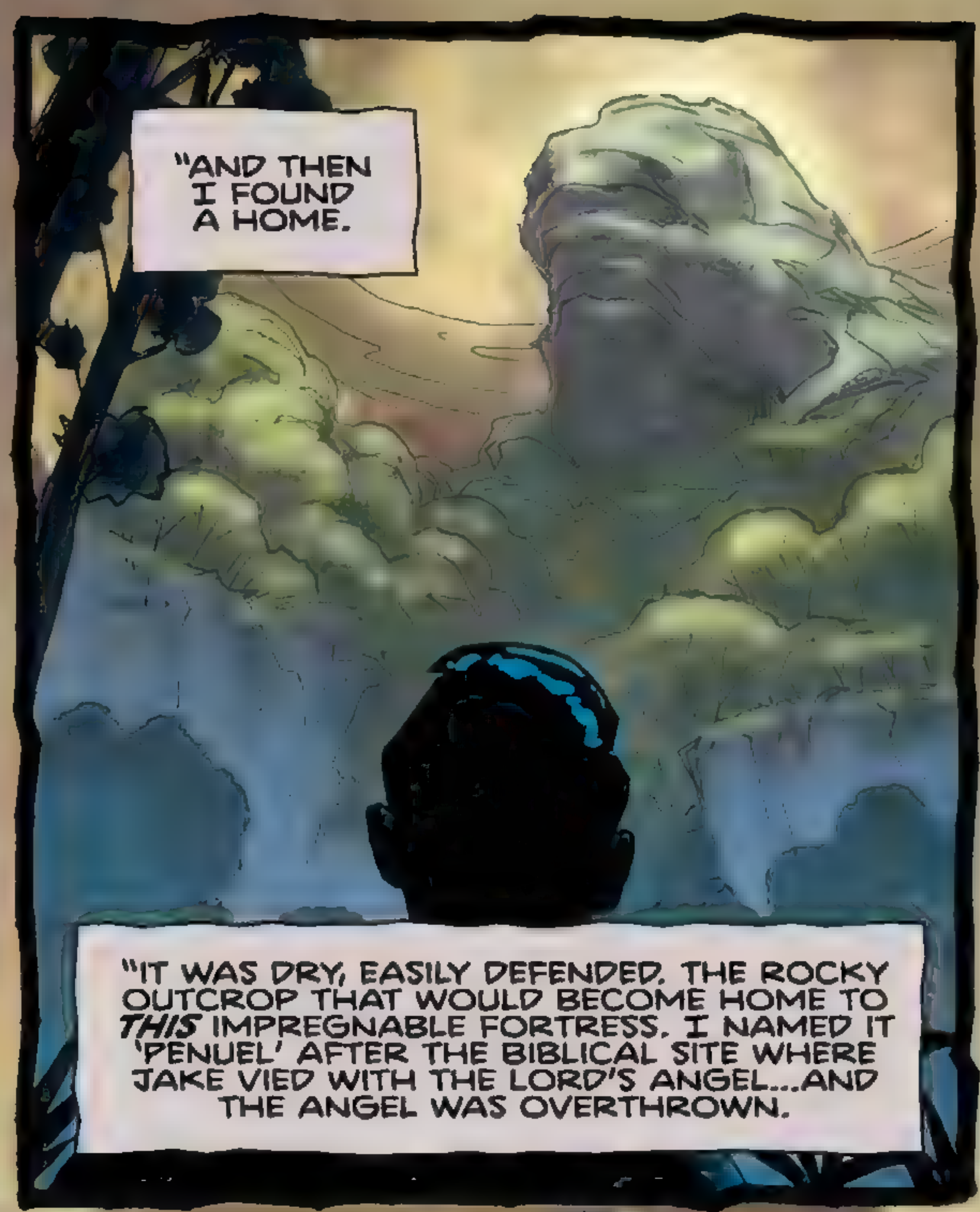


BUT...!
YOU...

≡Sigh≡
YES. YES...
MY LORD.


A comic book panel showing two men in a flooded, ruined city. The man in the foreground is shirtless and muscular, looking forward with a determined expression. The man behind him has red hair and a beard, wearing a dark vest. They are standing in shallow water, with the ruins of a city in the background.

"ONCE IN CONTROL, MY YEARS OF STUDY CAME TO FRUITION. SOON THE RUDDER WAS WORKING. THE MAPS WERE STUDIED. I FOUND LAND.

A comic book panel showing a person from behind, looking out over a vast, rocky landscape. The person is wearing a dark, hooded garment. In the distance, a large, rocky outcrop rises from the sea under a hazy sky.

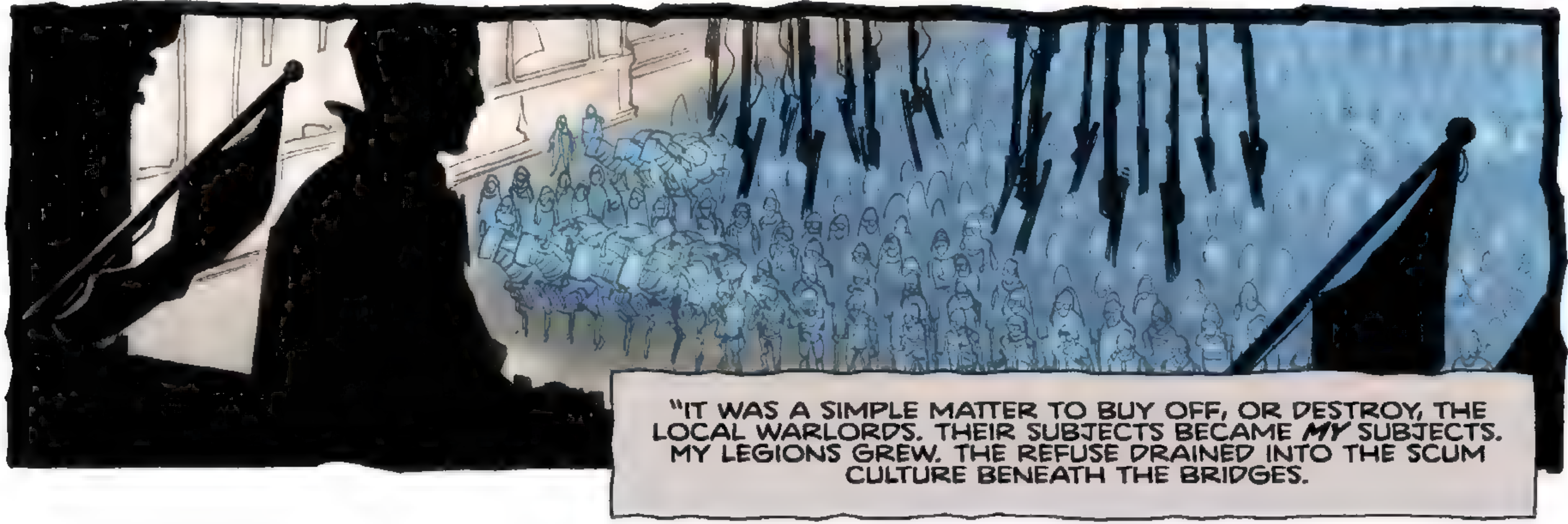
"AND THEN I FOUND A HOME.

"IT WAS DRY, EASILY DEFENDED. THE ROCKY OUTCROP THAT WOULD BECOME HOME TO *THIS* IMPREGNABLE FORTRESS. I NAMED IT 'PENUEL' AFTER THE BIBLICAL SITE WHERE JAKE VIED WITH THE LORD'S ANGEL...AND THE ANGEL WAS OVERTHROWN.

A comic book panel showing a large, ruined industrial complex, likely a robotics factory. The complex is made of stone and metal, with many windows and doors. It is surrounded by a body of water, and there are some small, dark figures in the foreground. The sky is hazy and yellow.

"NEXT, THE ROBOTICS FACTORY.

"THE TECHNOLOGY WAS RUDIMENTARY REALLY, THE WATERLOGGED PIECES ALL JUST WAITING FOR SOMEONE WHO KNEW HOW TO TURN ON THE POWER. SOON I HAD AN ARMY OF MECHANICAL SERVANTS AND WEAPONS TO TAME WHATEVER I ENCOUNTERED.

A comic book panel showing a large crowd of people, likely subjects or soldiers, standing in a line. They are wearing simple, light-colored clothing. In the foreground, there are two large, dark, ornate structures, possibly part of a ship or a fortress. The background is a hazy, blue sky.

"IT WAS A SIMPLE MATTER TO BUY OFF, OR DESTROY, THE LOCAL WARLORDS. THEIR SUBJECTS BECAME *MY* SUBJECTS. MY LEGIONS GREW. THE REFUSE DRAINED INTO THE SCUM CULTURE BENEATH THE BRIDGES.

"AND THEN I FORGED THE ULTIMATE
WARRIORS, MY *CANNIBAL GUARDS*."



"THEY WERE A TRIBE OF MUTANTS FROM ANOTHER BARGE
AND BIRTHED IN A BABY-FARM SLAUGHTER BIN NOT
DISSIMILAR TO MY OWN. THEY MUTINIED, DEVoured ALL
ON BOARD IN A PIRANHA-LIKE FRENZY, AND SWAM MILES
TO SHORE. THEY RECOGNIZED ME AS KIN, AS THEIR RULER."

"BUT THEY ARE TOO
SAVAGE TO LIVE
AMONG US. I LOCKED
THEIR DISTENDED JAWS
TIGHT AND STORED
THEM IN BUNKERS FAR
FROM HERE, WHERE
THEY CHEW THEIR
BONDS IN FRENZY. I
MAY NEVER NEED TO
CALL ON THEM."

"BUT THEY
ARE THERE."

"WAITING."



"IN FORTRESS PENUEL I HAVE BUILT
A SOCIETY IN *MY* IMAGE. THERE WILL
BE NO LAWLESSNESS *HERE*."

THERE
IS *NO* FORCE
IN *THIS* WORLD
THAT CAN
CHALLENGE *US*,
BARRABAS. AND
NO ONE, *NO*
ONE, CAN
ESCAPE OUR
WRATH
WHEN IT IS
LOOSED.

LEAVE
ME NOW, MY
FRIEND. TODAY'S
EPISODE WILL
PASS.


"HERE, ORDER
PREVAELS."



THE ORDER
PREVAELS
NO LAWLESSNESS

"HERE, ORDER
MUST *ALWAYS*
PREVAIL."



A man with a stern expression, wearing a white robe with a yellow sash adorned with various medals, stands in a library. He holds a large globe of the Earth. The library is filled with bookshelves, some containing books labeled '738674'. On a shelf to the left, there is a bust of a man and a can of 'TOMATO SOUP'. To the right, a human skull sits on a shelf. The background shows a window with a view of a city and a large, stylized orange face in the sky.

"HISTORY IS NOT A LADDER TO HUMAN WISDOM. IT IS A TREE ON WHICH EACH BRANCH AND BUD IS A PRODUCT OF CONTINGENCY, UNREPEATABLE, UNPREDICTABLE, DEEPENING, AND GROWING WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME. IN THE SILENCE OF MY PRIVATE CHAMBER, THE ART AND LITERATURE OF MY YOUTH PLAY IN ENDLESS REELS IN MY EVER-RESTLESS MIND."

"I THOUGHT I HAD ERADICATED ANY CHALLENGE. I WAS CERTAIN I HAD *ELIMINATED* THE UNKNOWN."

"UNTIL NOW."

"NOW I MUST TRUST TO *HOPE* THAT AN OLD ENEMY HAS NOT RISEN FROM THE DEAD."

THIS SHOULD SLOW THE BLEEDING, BUT SHE'S STILL UNCONSCIOUS AND FEVERISH.

NOW THAT THE STRANGE NOISE IN THE WALL HAS PASSED, WE HAVE TO GET HER HELP!



ALL RIGHT. LET'S GET HER BACK DOWN THE PASSAGEWAY. WESTIN AND I WILL DISTRACT THE CREATURE, AND YOU AND SIMON GET HER AWAY. IF WE CAN REACH THE BRIDGES, WE CAN GET HER MEDICINE AND PREPARE ANOTHER ASSAULT ON--

HOLD ON! THIS ISN'T OUR FIGHT ANYMORE!

AND WHO SAYS *YOU'RE* IN CHARGE, ANYWAY? OPAL HAD IT COMING, THINKING SHE COULD SINGLE-HANDEDLY DEFEAT TOMO WOLFE'S ARMY. I SAY WE LEAVE HER HERE AND MAKE A RUN FOR IT.



WE ARE **NOT** LEAVING HER HERE AFTER ALL SHE'S DONE FOR US...FOR **ME!** I'D RATHER DIE THAN ABANDON HER!

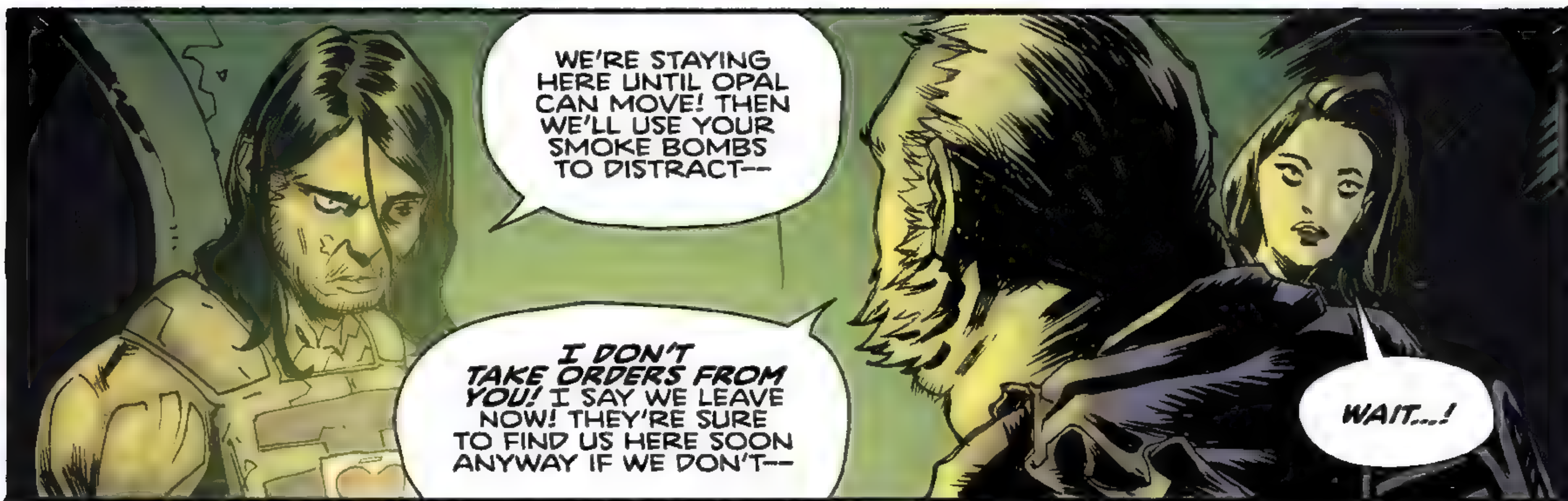


OPAL MUST BE A **SAINT** IF SHE CAN SURVIVE WEARING THE MASK, ORCHID. THIS IS WHAT THE REBELLION HAS BEEN WAITING FOR. WE **HAVE** TO GET HER BACK TO THE BRIDGES.

I JUST WANT HER TO BE WELL. SHE'S... ALL I HAVE LEFT IN THE WORLD.



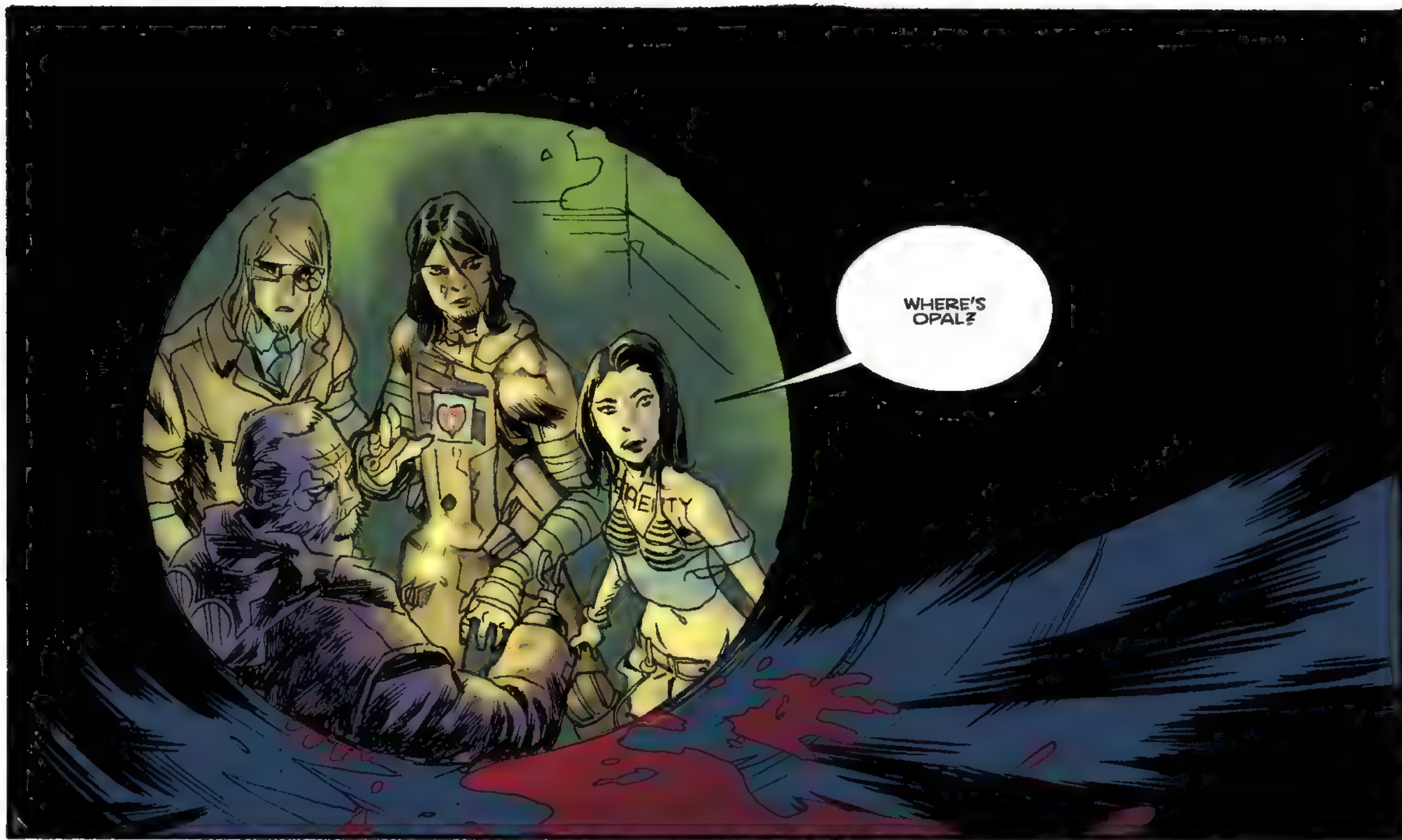
THAT **WEAKLING** SIMON AND THE GIRL CAN'T EVEN FIGHT! WE HAVE **NO** CHANCE IF WE BRING OPAL. LET'S CONCENTRATE ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT--GETTING OUT OF HERE ALIVE AND, YES, COMPENSATING ME FOR THE LOSS OF FEATHERS!



WE'RE STAYING HERE UNTIL OPAL CAN MOVE! THEN WE'LL USE YOUR SMOKE BOMBS TO DISTRACT--

I DON'T TAKE ORDERS FROM YOU! I SAY WE LEAVE NOW! THEY'RE SURE TO FIND US HERE SOON ANYWAY IF WE DON'T--

WAIT...!



WHERE'S OPAL?

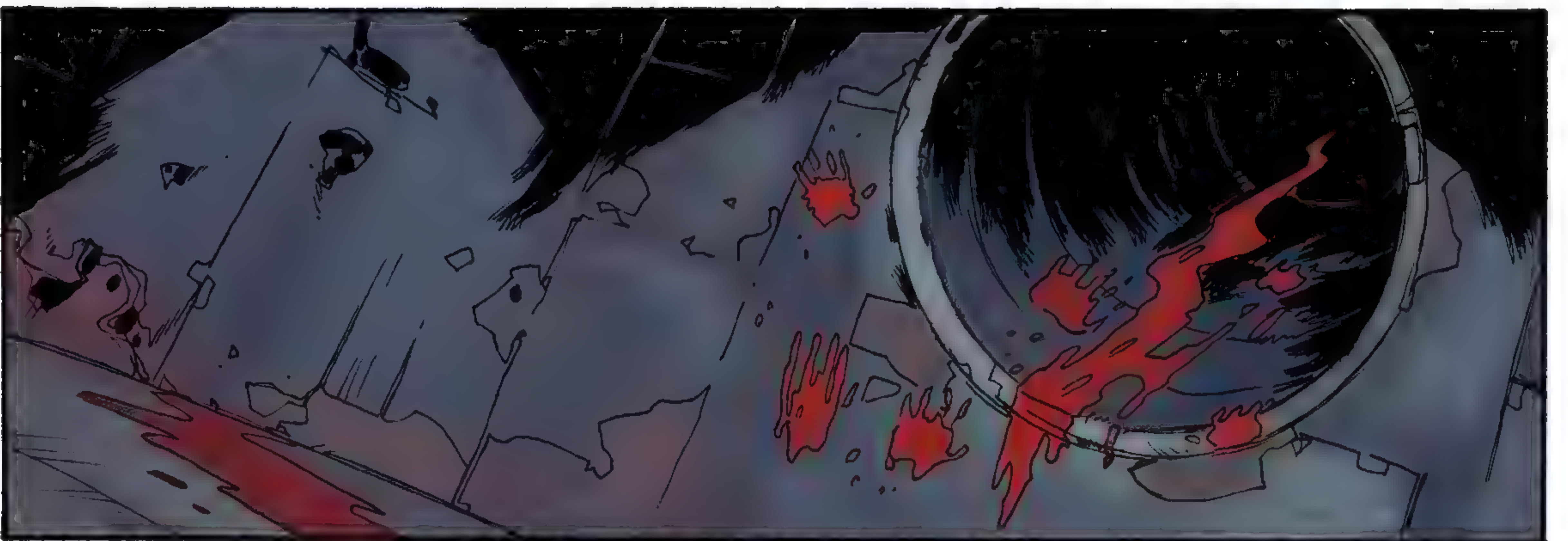
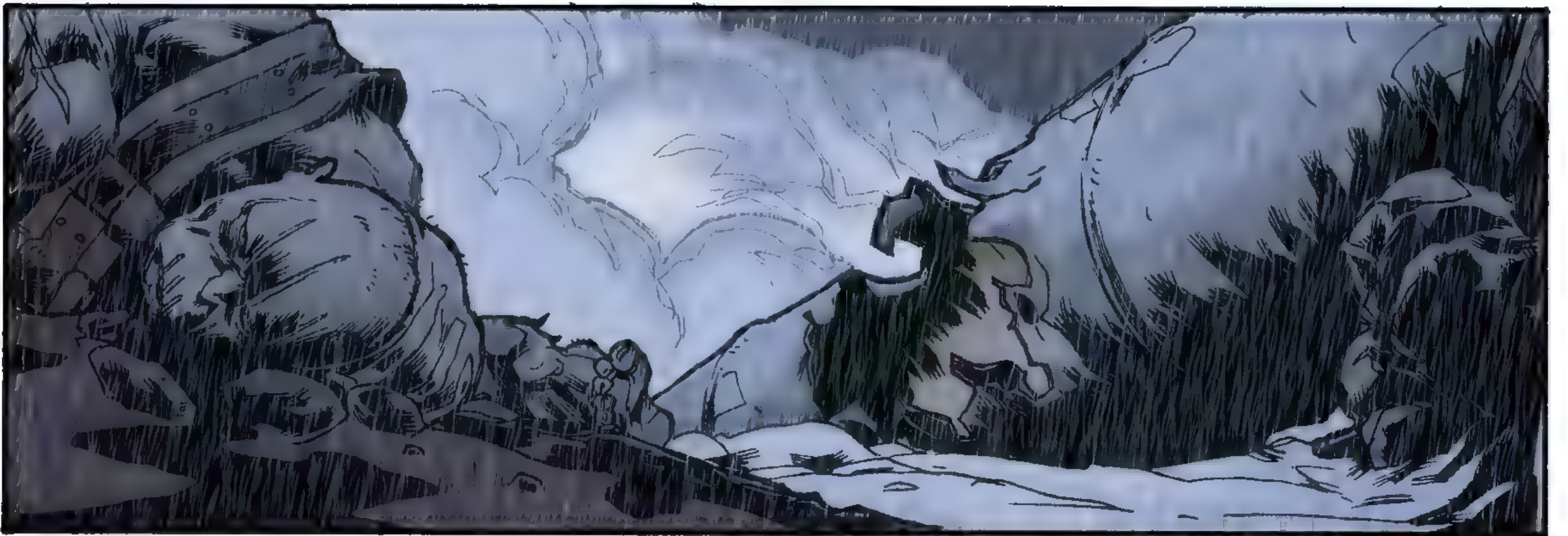
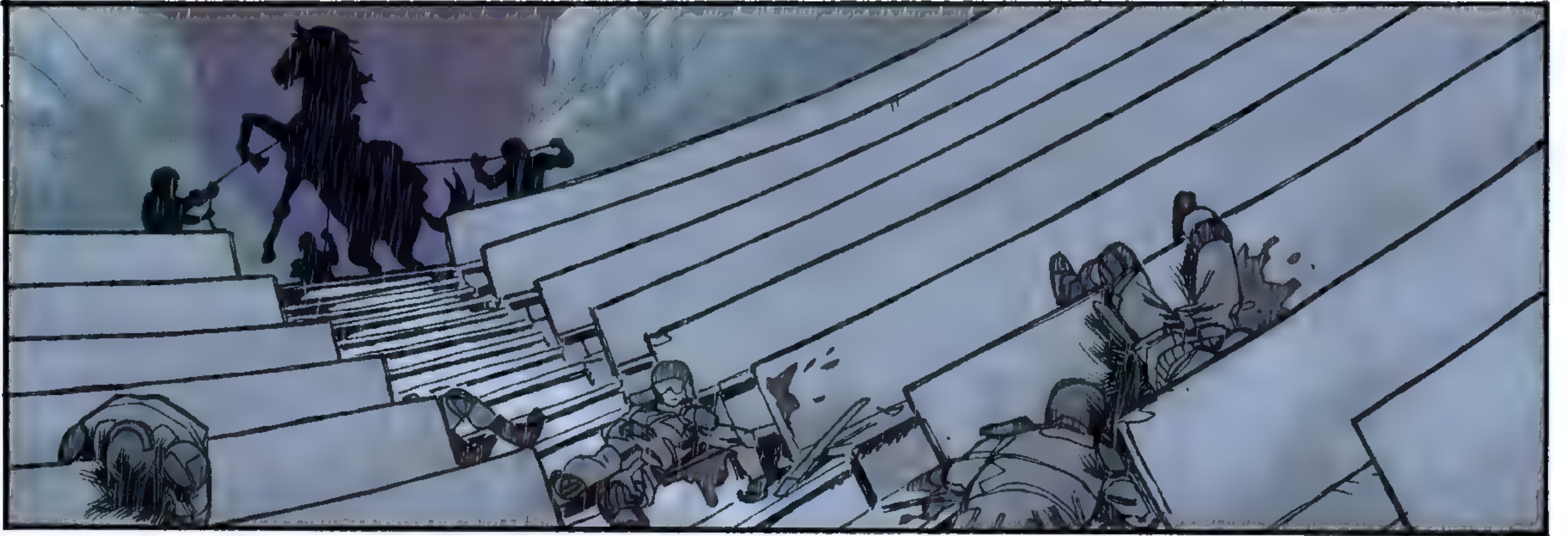
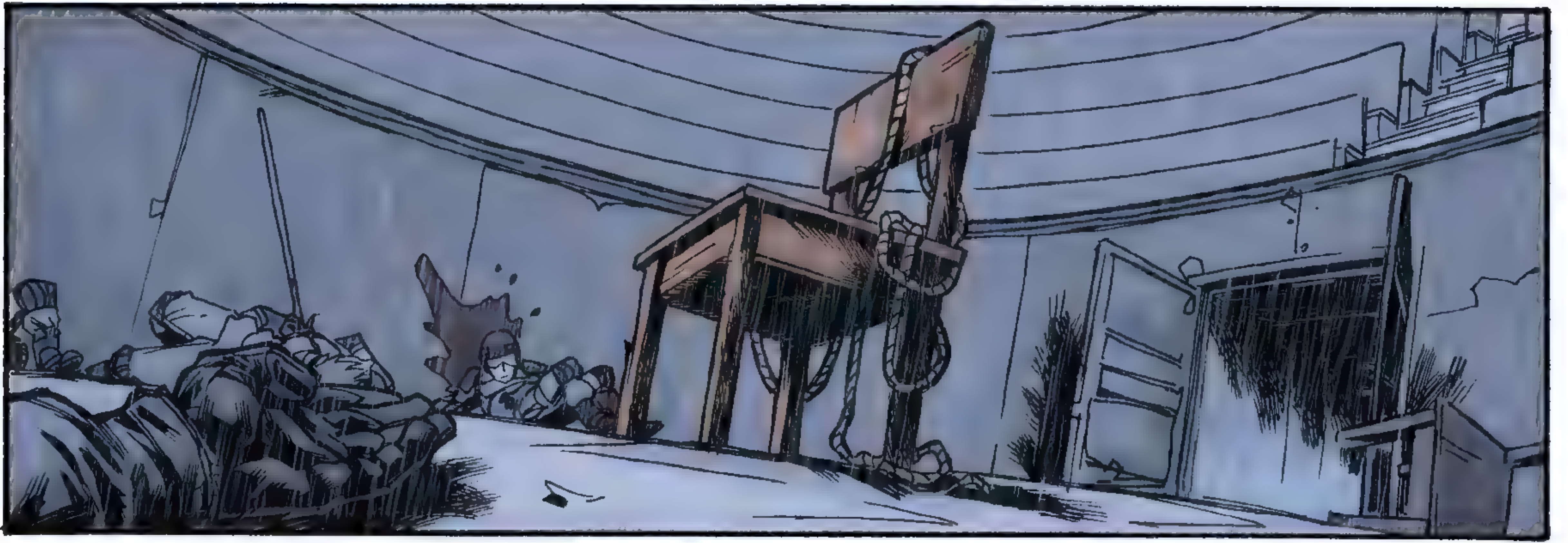
SHUM SHUM
SHUM O'REE...SOLDIERS
STILL AND ORDERLY, ARM
TO ARM AND KNEE TO
KNEE, WAITING FOR THE
GREAT EVENT...

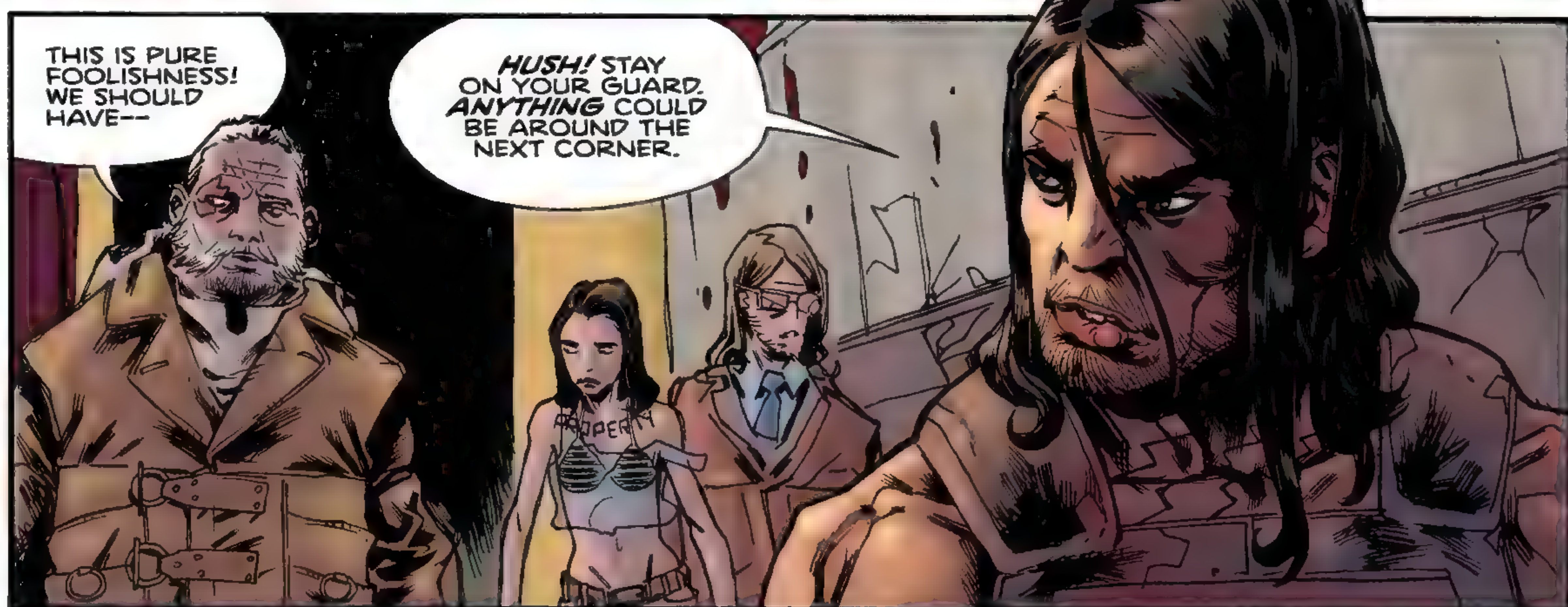
...STANDS
THE SILENT
REGIMENT.

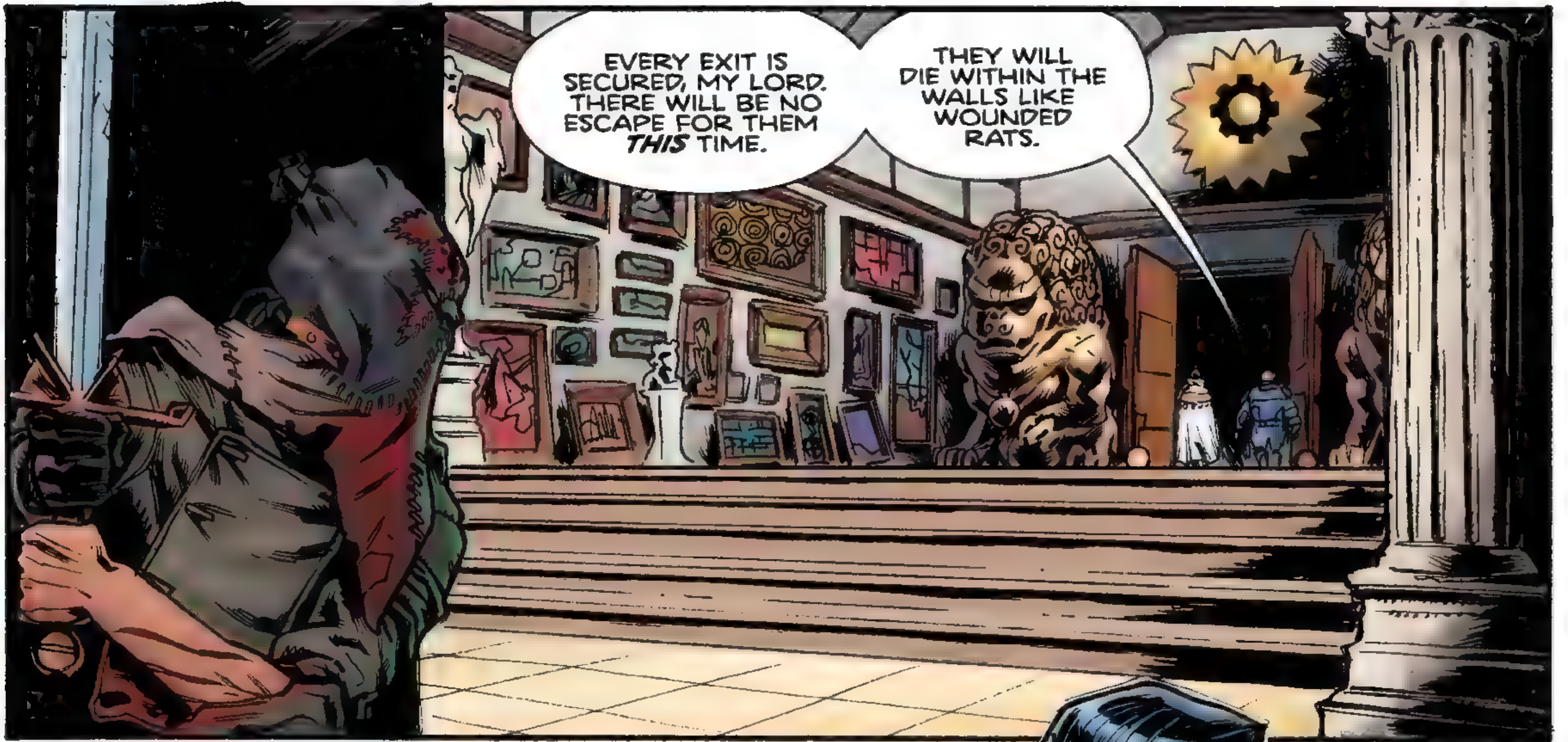






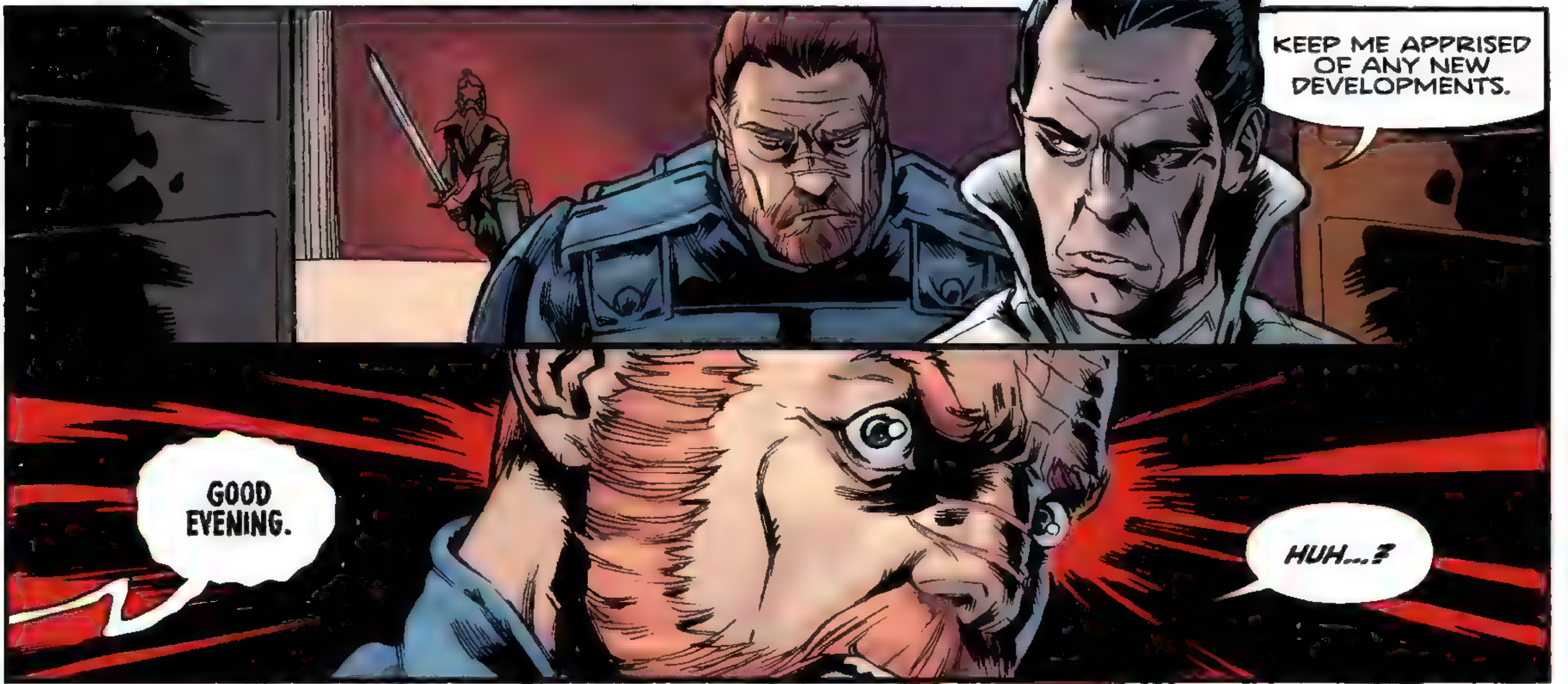






EVERY EXIT IS SECURED, MY LORD. THERE WILL BE NO ESCAPE FOR THEM *THIS* TIME.

THEY WILL DIE WITHIN THE WALLS LIKE WOUNDED RATS.



KEEP ME APPRISED OF ANY NEW DEVELOPMENTS.

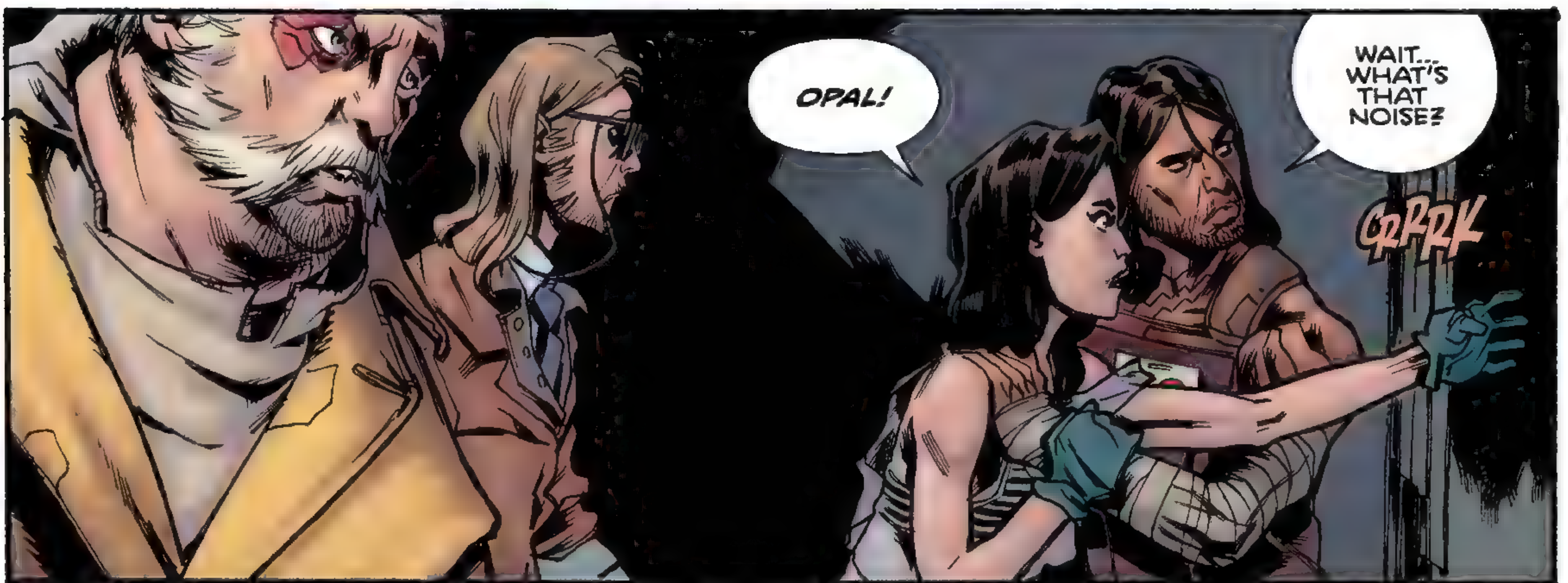
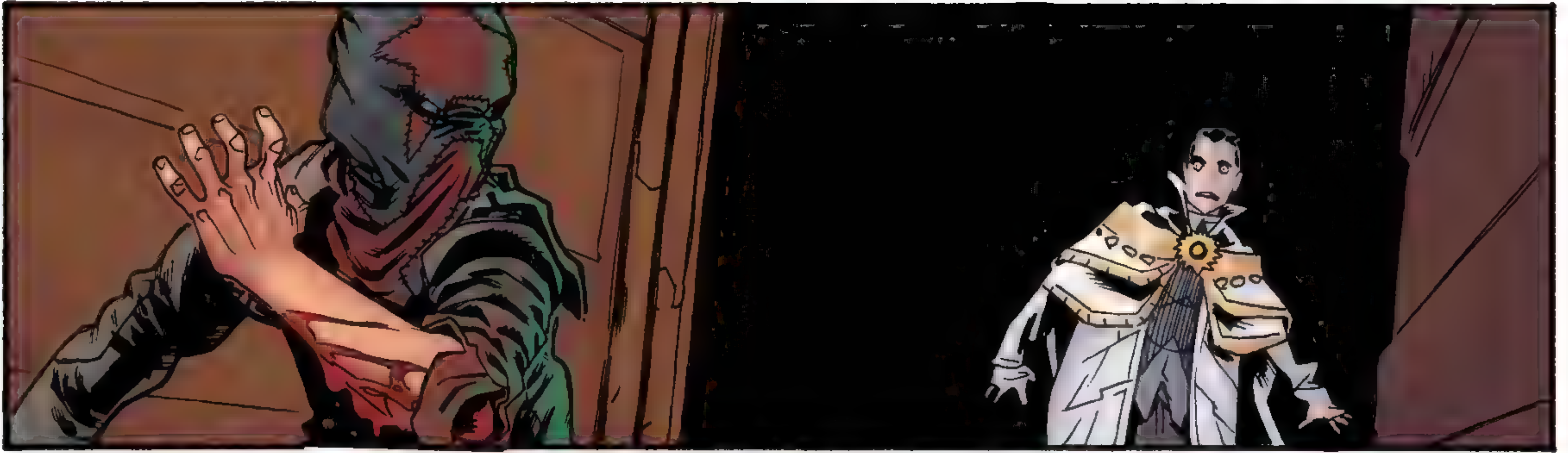
GOOD EVENING.

HUH...?



≡GLRK≡









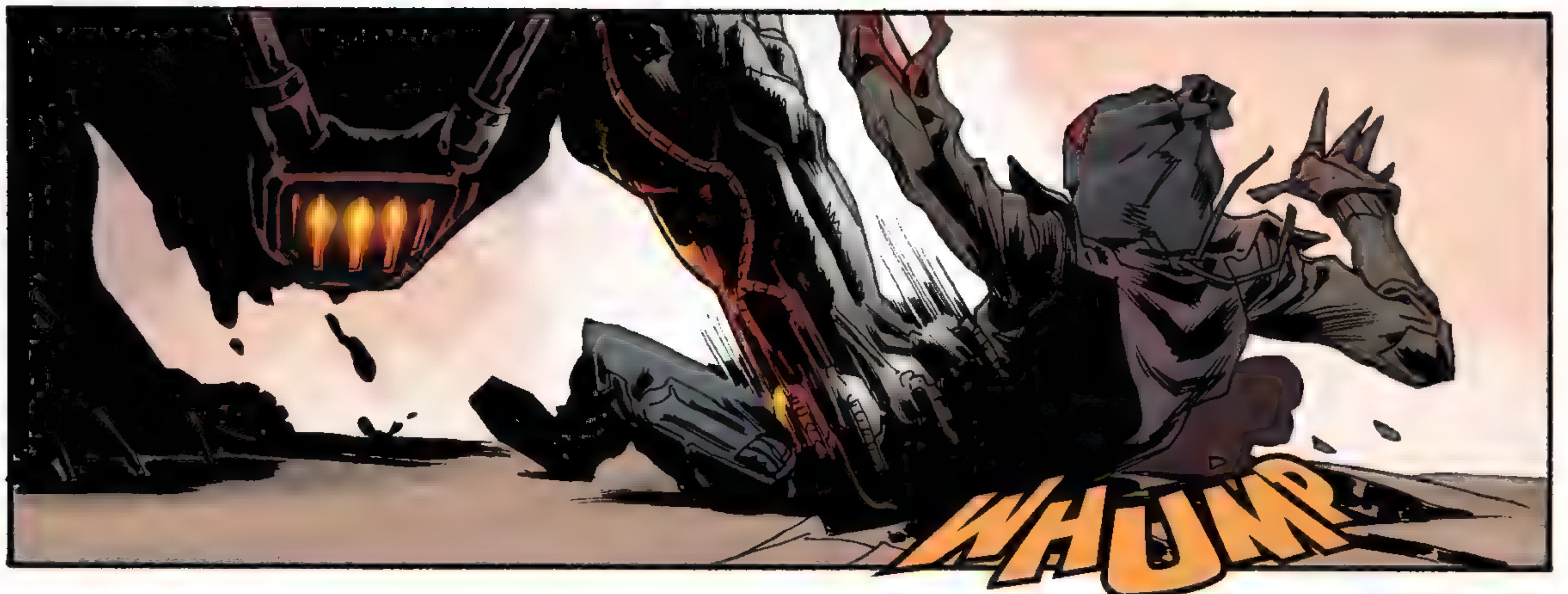
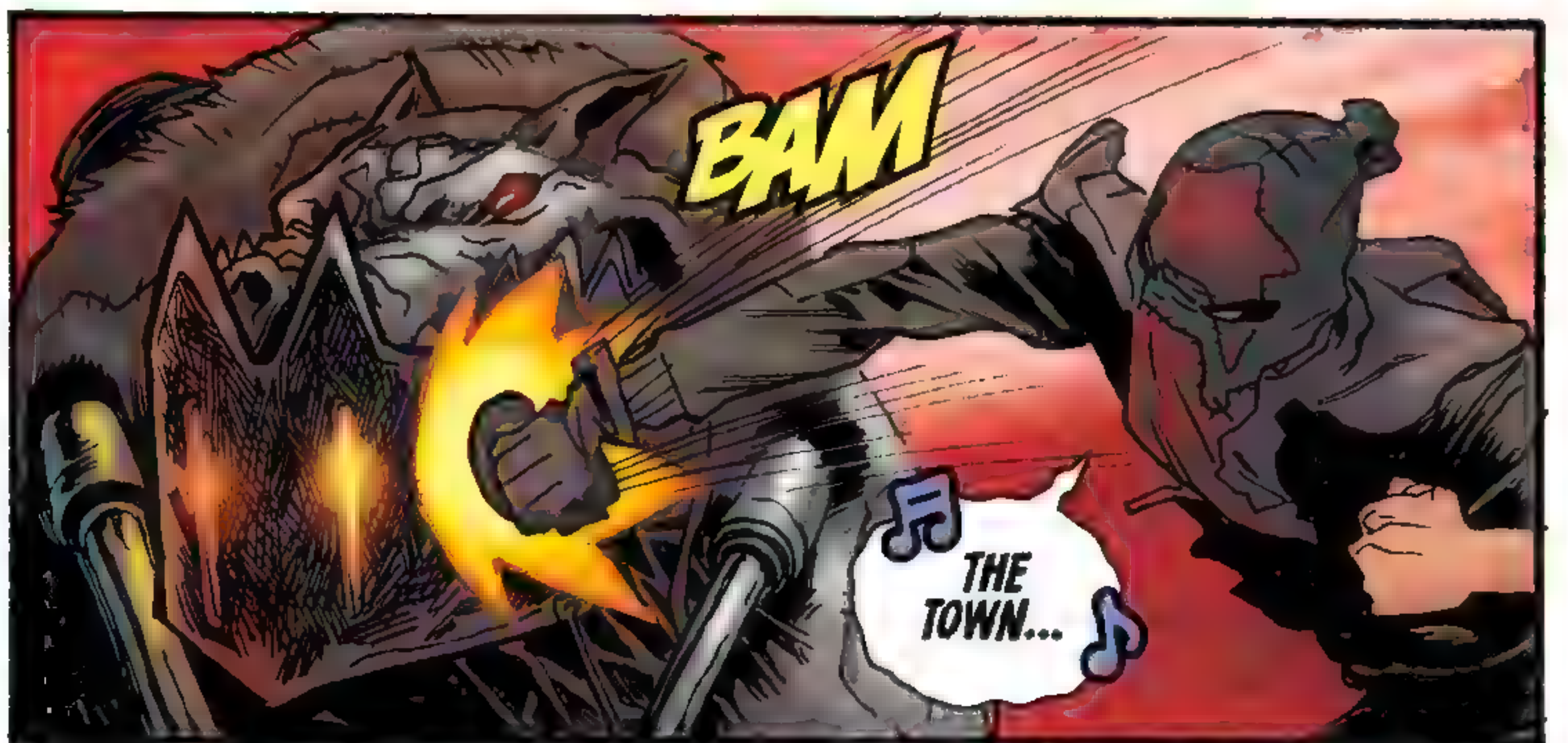
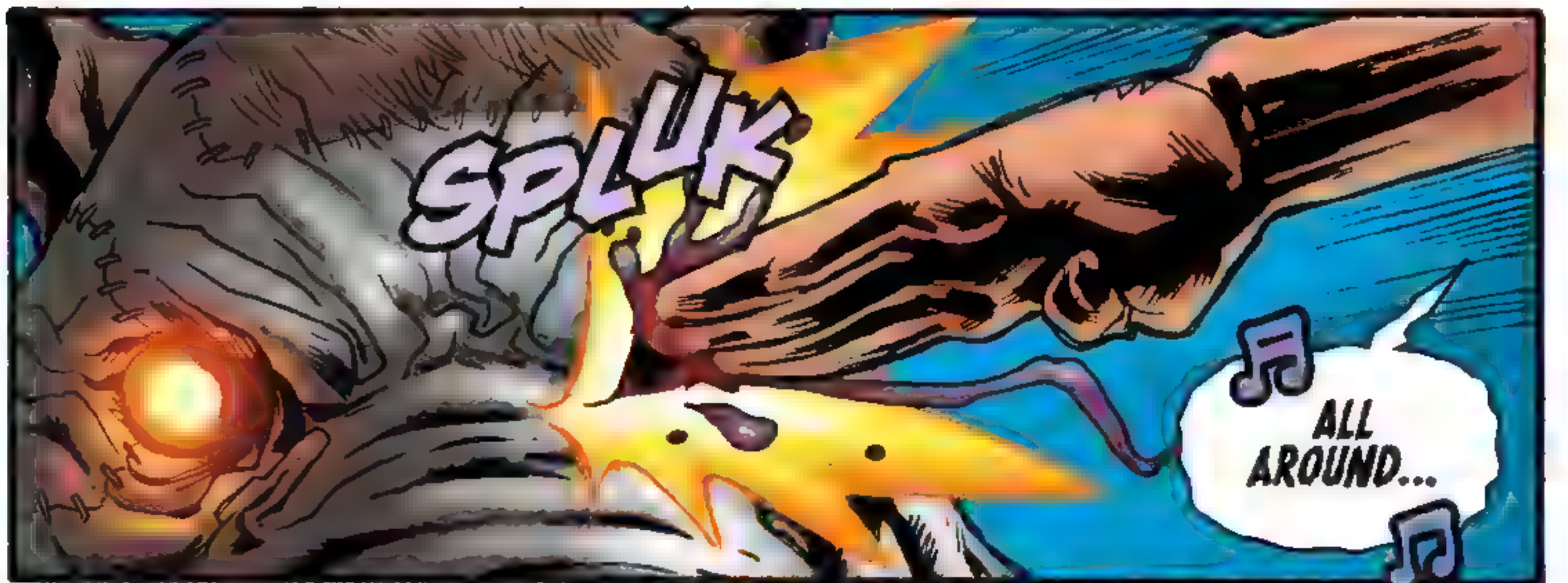


OPAL!

Uh-ho
LET ME
GO!

THERE'S
NOTHING WE
CAN DO! ONLY
THE POWER OF
THE MASK HAS
ANY CHANCE TO
DEFEAT THAT
BEAST!

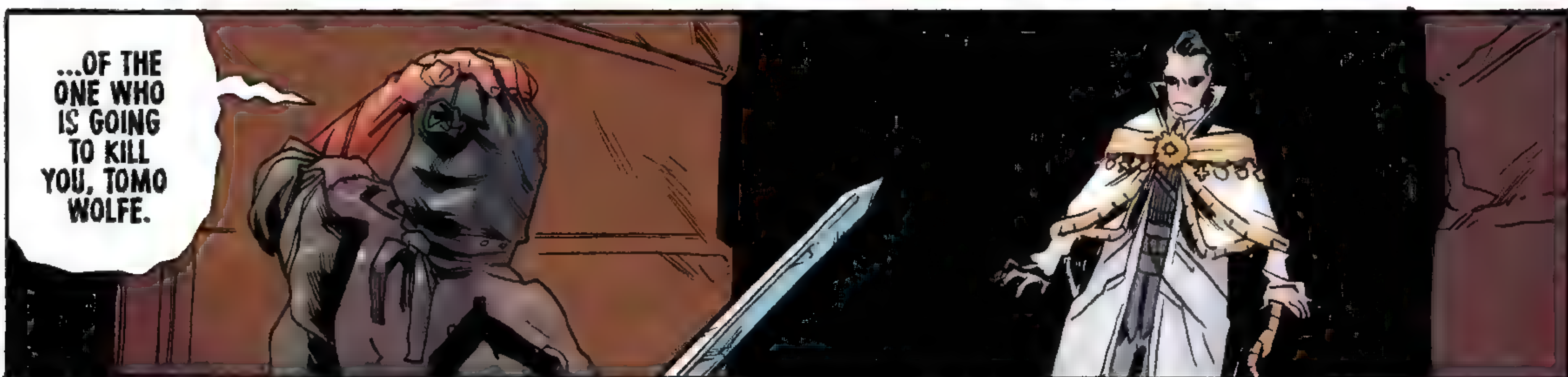
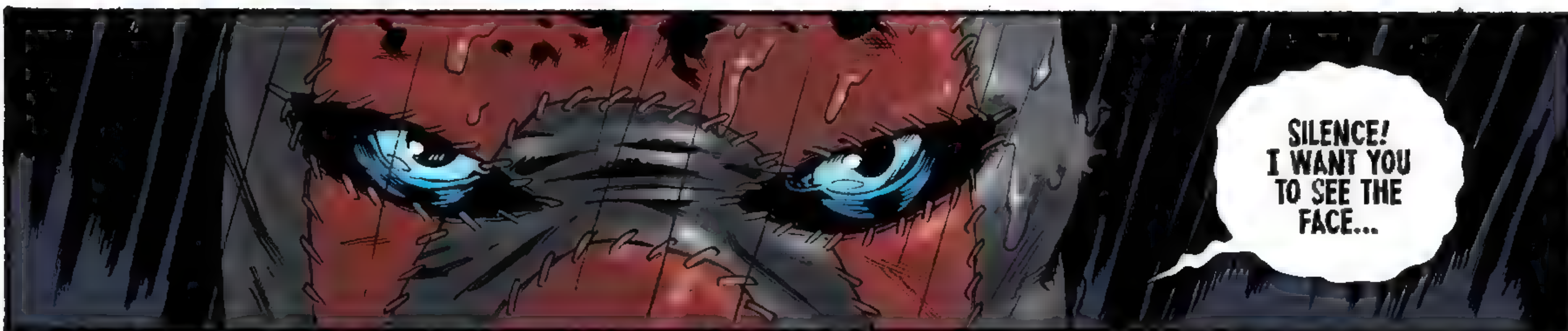





...NOW!

RRRAHH

SWOOSH





YES. I
HAVE ALWAYS
BEEN THE
REAL GENERAL
CHINA.

"WHEN MY TRUE
LOVE, CHINA, WAS
KILLED, KIMATHI
AND I COULD
NOT ACCEPT THAT
HE WAS GONE.


"SO I
ASSUMED
HIS NAME
AND HIS
ROLE.

"PROVIDER.

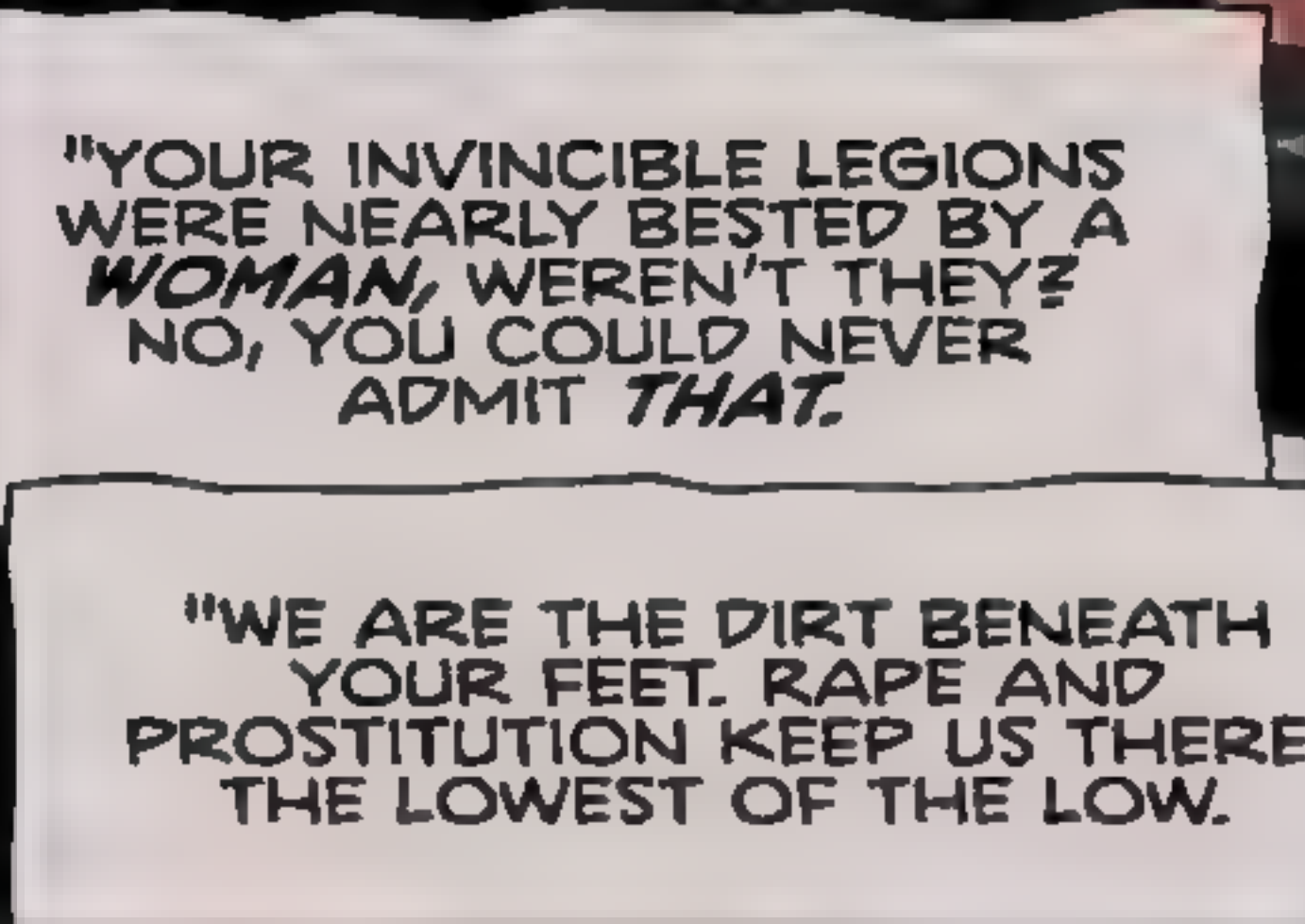
"PROTECTOR.

"UNTIL I
BECAME
THIS.

"NO ONE WOULD ACCEPT A **WOMAN**
AS LEADER OF A CLANDESTINE REBELLION,
SO I--OPAL--HID UNDER THIS MASK.
AND **GENERAL** CHINA I BECAME.

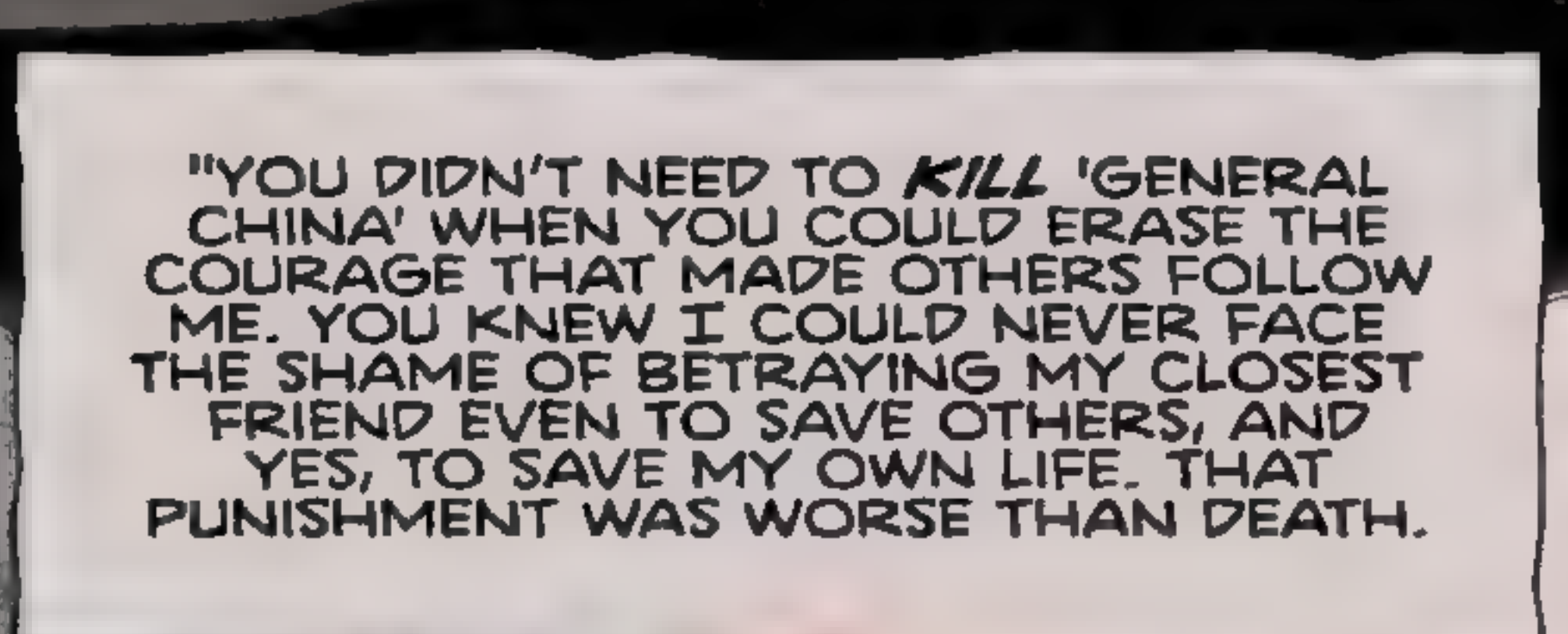


"WE HAVE BOTH
KEPT MY IDENTITY
A SECRET FOR OUR
OWN REASONS,
HAVEN'T WE,
TOMO WOLFE?"

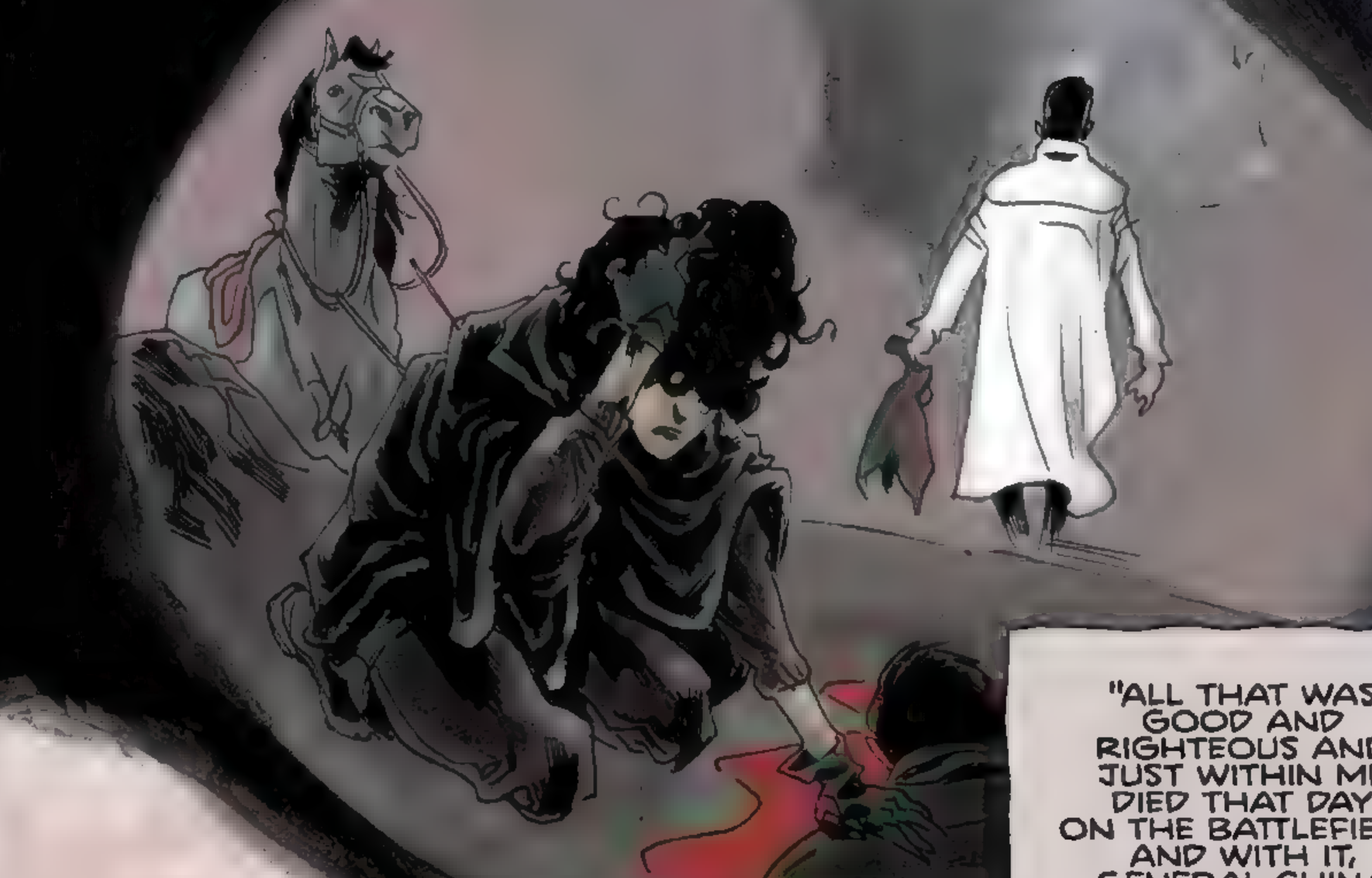


"YOUR INVINCIBLE LEGIONS
WERE NEARLY BESTED BY A
WOMAN, WEREN'T THEY?
NO, YOU COULD NEVER
ADMIT *THAT*."

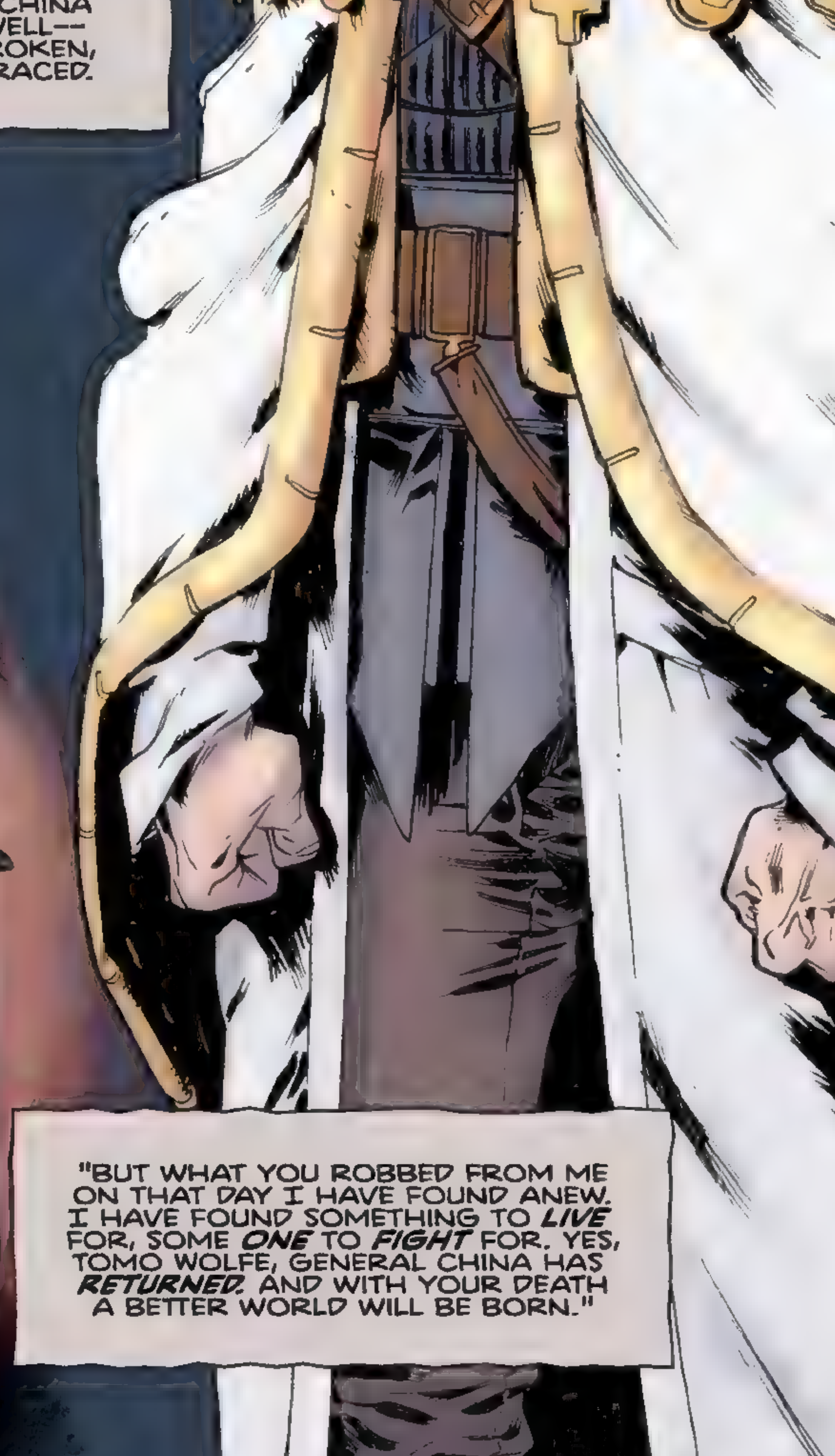
"WE ARE THE DIRT BENEATH
YOUR FEET. RAPE AND
PROSTITUTION KEEP US THERE,
THE LOWEST OF THE LOW."



"YOU DIDN'T NEED TO *KILL* 'GENERAL
CHINA' WHEN YOU COULD ERASE THE
COURAGE THAT MADE OTHERS FOLLOW
ME. YOU KNEW I COULD NEVER FACE
THE SHAME OF BETRAYING MY CLOSEST
FRIEND EVEN TO SAVE OTHERS, AND
YES, TO SAVE MY OWN LIFE. THAT
PUNISHMENT WAS WORSE THAN DEATH."



"ALL THAT WAS
GOOD AND
RIGHTEOUS AND
JUST WITHIN ME
DIED THAT DAY
ON THE BATTLEFIELD.
AND WITH IT,
GENERAL CHINA
DIED AS WELL—
ALONE, BROKEN,
AND DISGRACED."



"BUT WHAT YOU ROBBED FROM ME
ON THAT DAY I HAVE FOUND ANEW.
I HAVE FOUND SOMETHING TO *LIVE*
FOR, SOME *ONE TO FIGHT* FOR. YES,
TOMO WOLFE, GENERAL CHINA HAS
RETURNED. AND WITH YOUR DEATH
A BETTER WORLD WILL BE BORN."



ALL YOUR
HOPE IS VANITY.
AND IN THE END
YOU HAVE BEEN
UNDONE BY
YOUR PRIDE.



SMUG
TO THE LAST!
IT IS *YOU*
WHO WILL
BE—

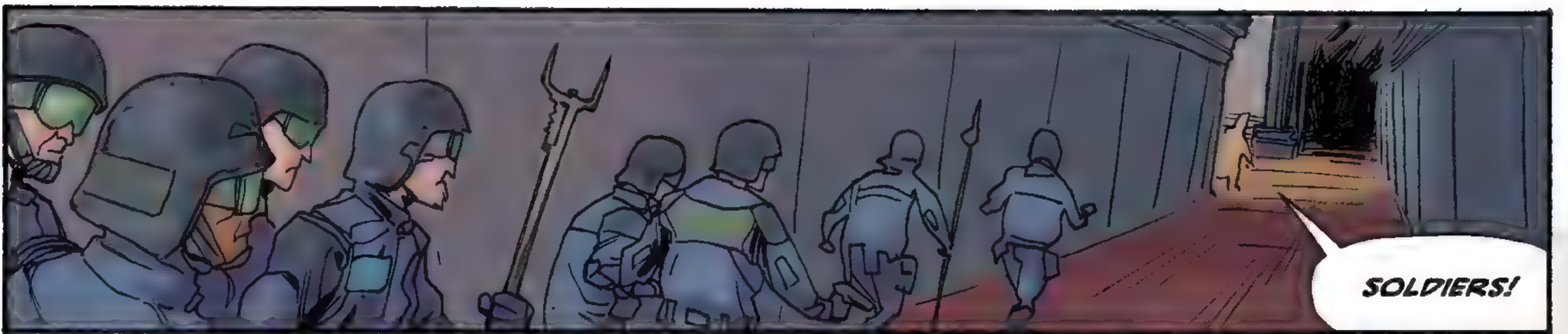
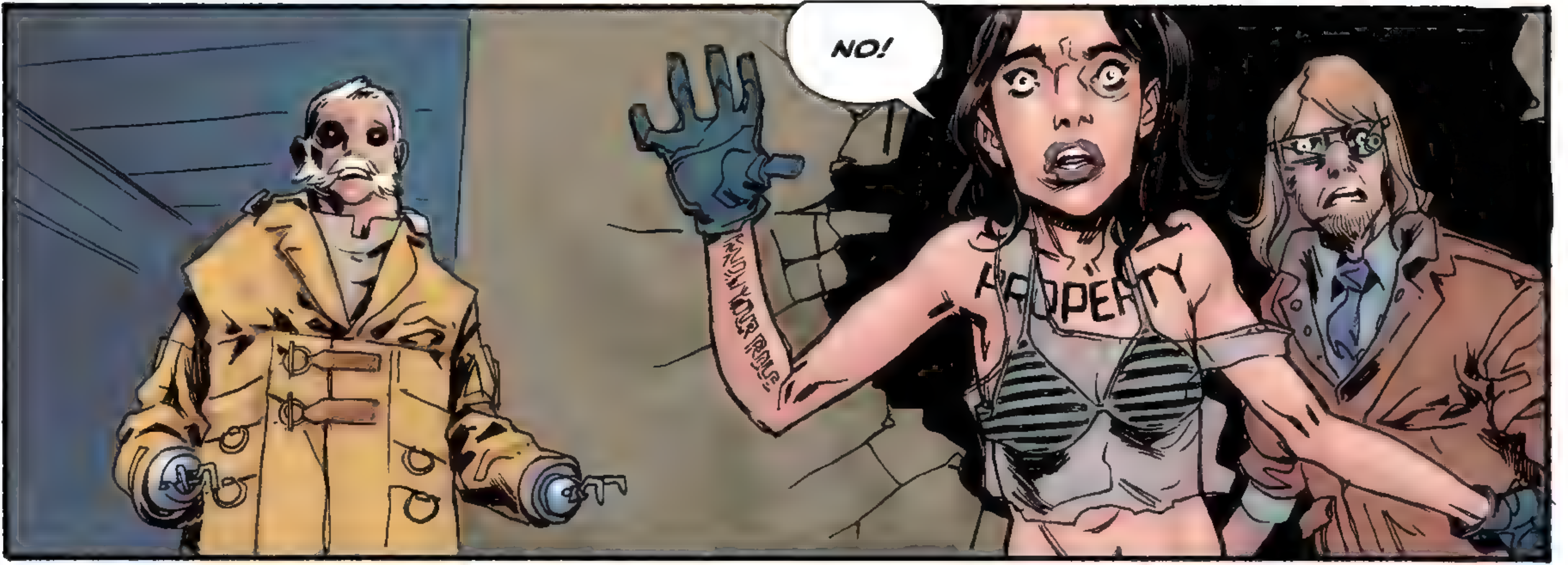


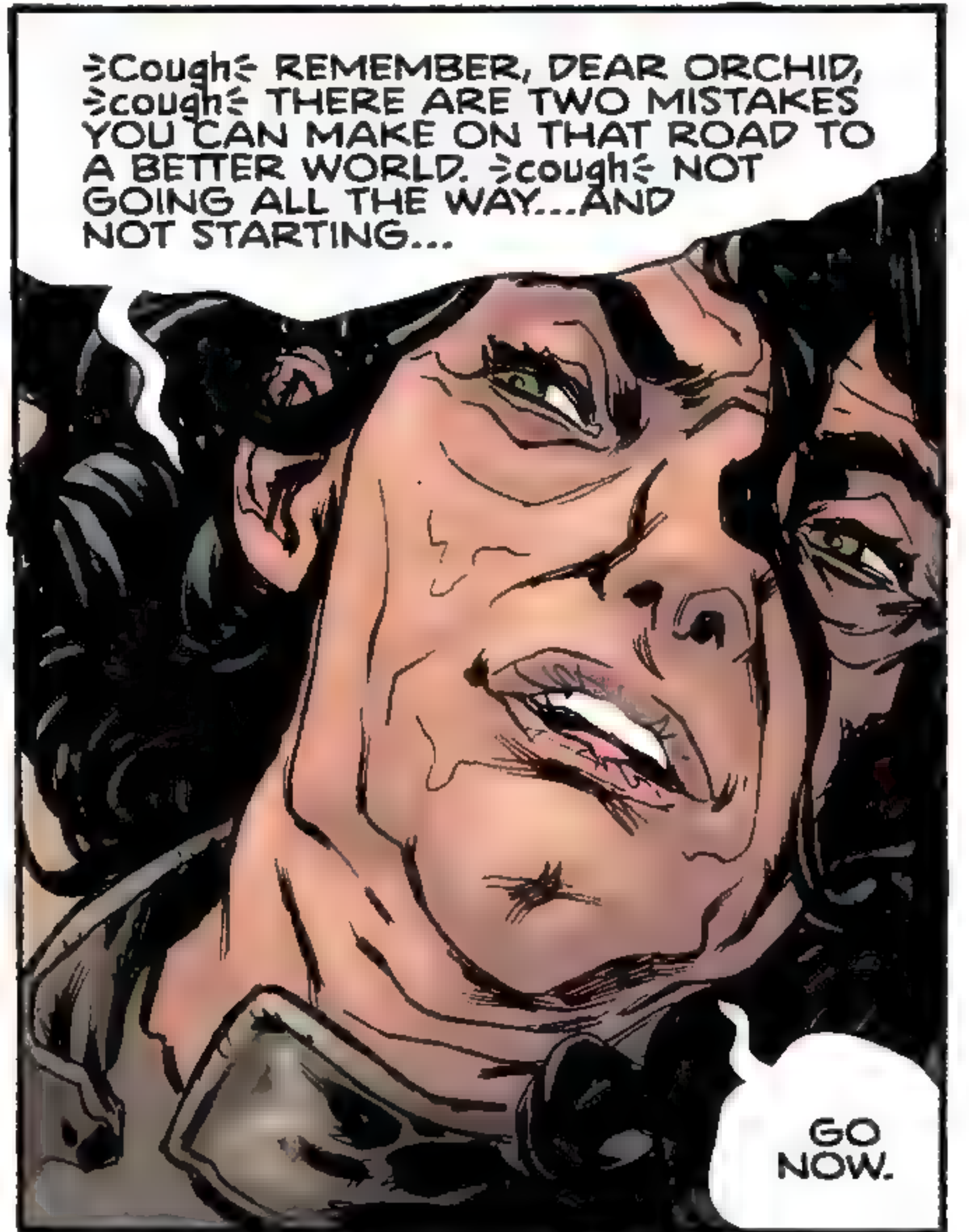
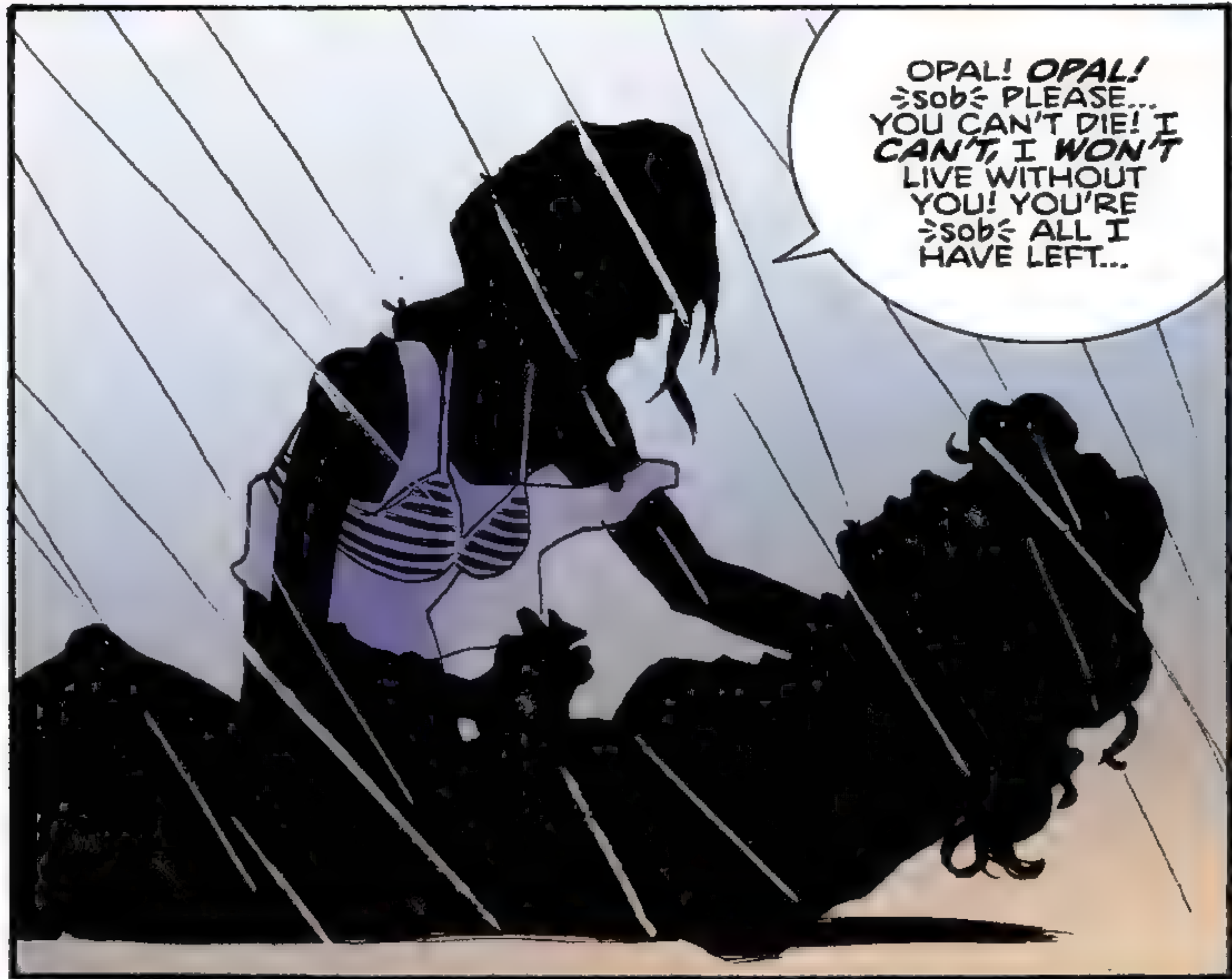
OPAL!
LOOK
OUT!

SHHHH!

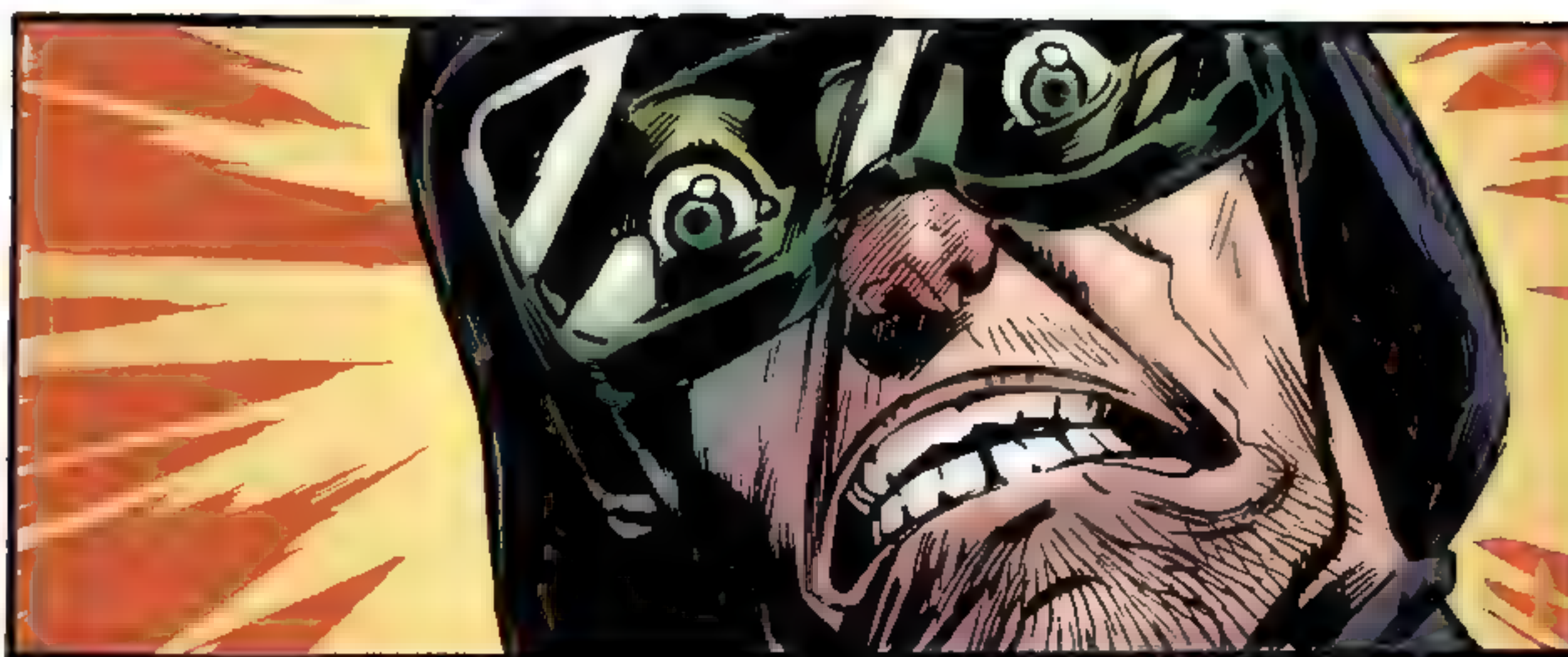
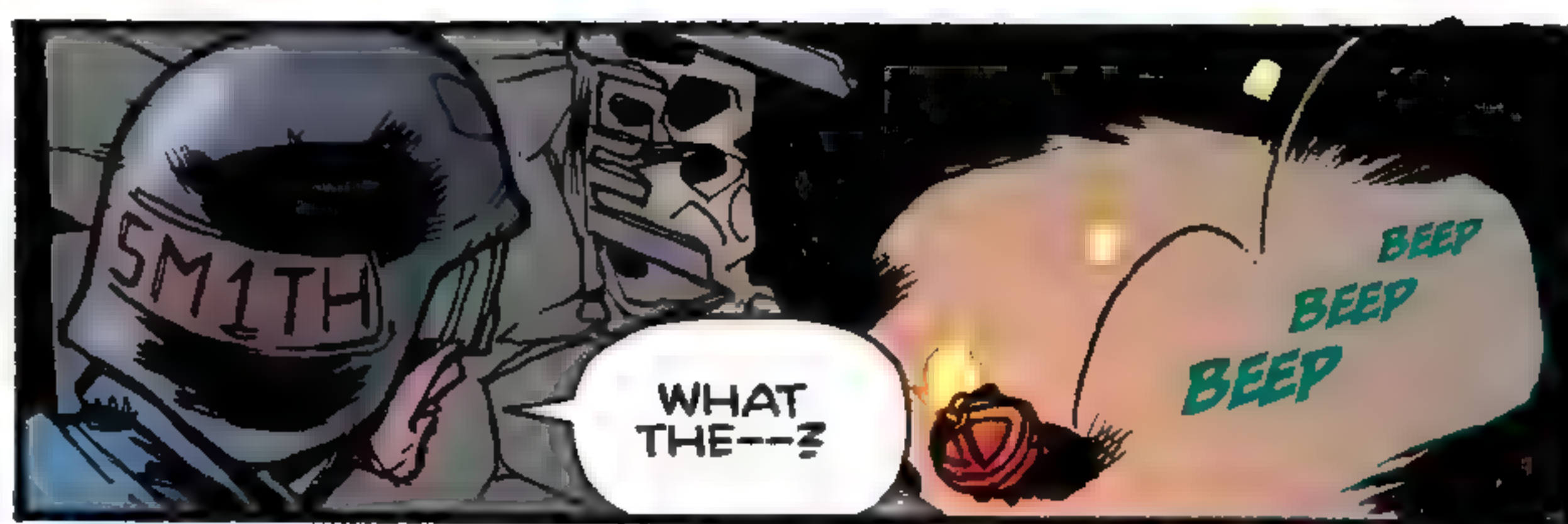


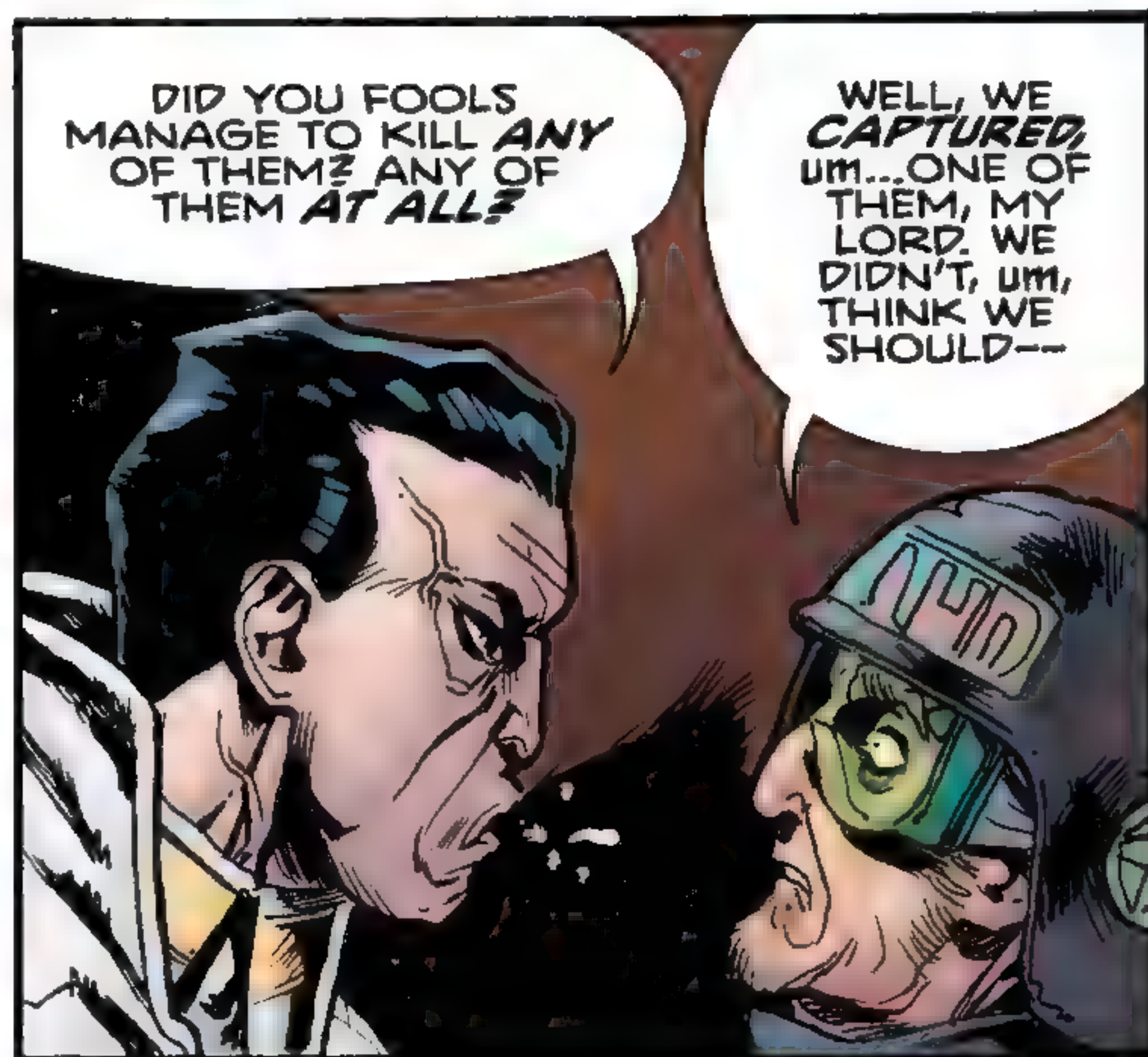
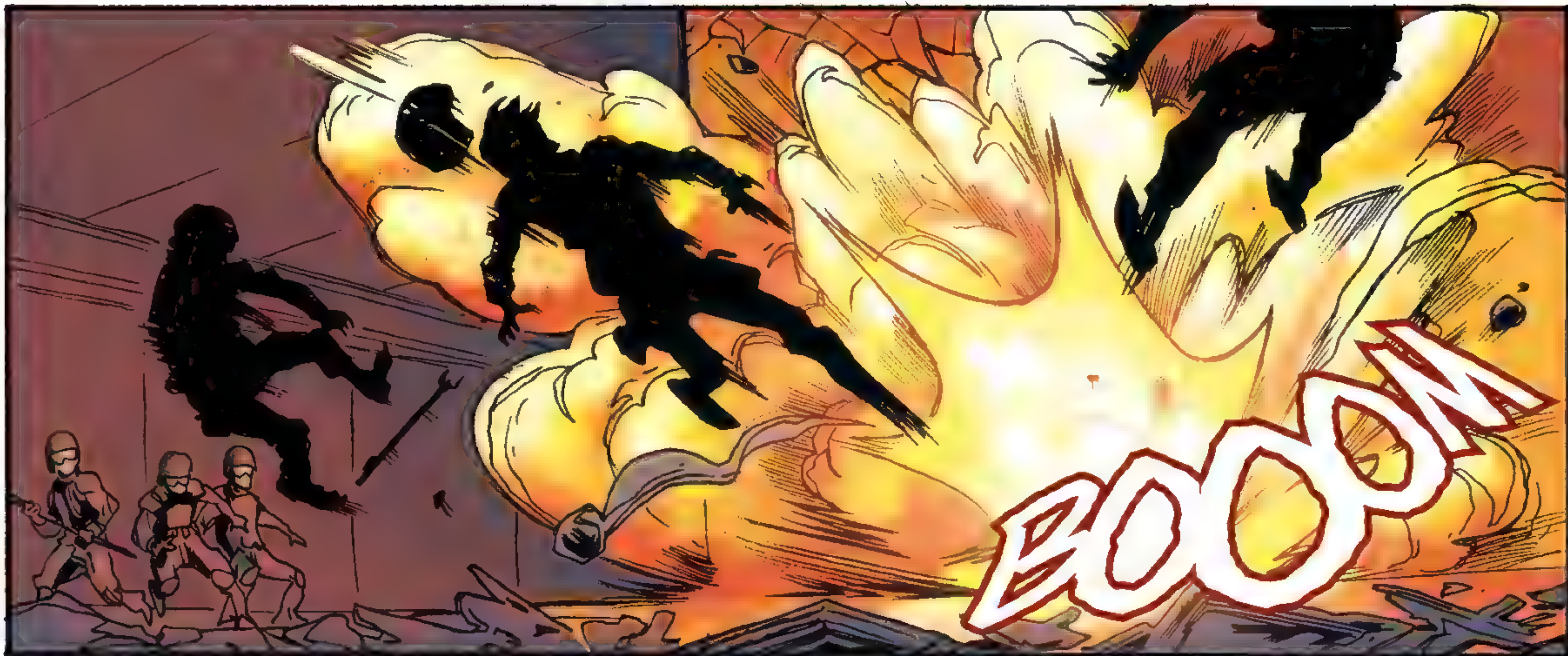
GAAHH!

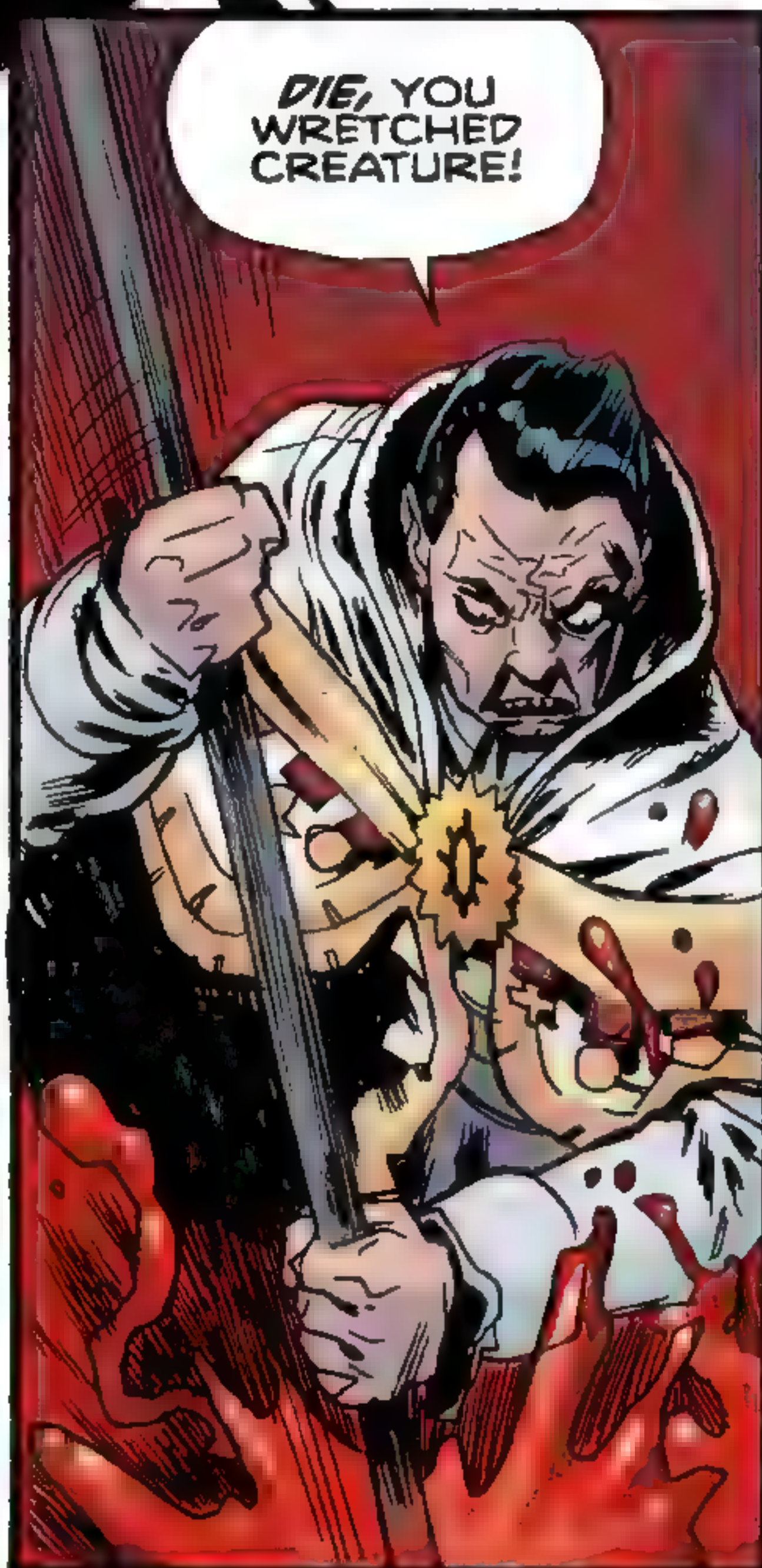
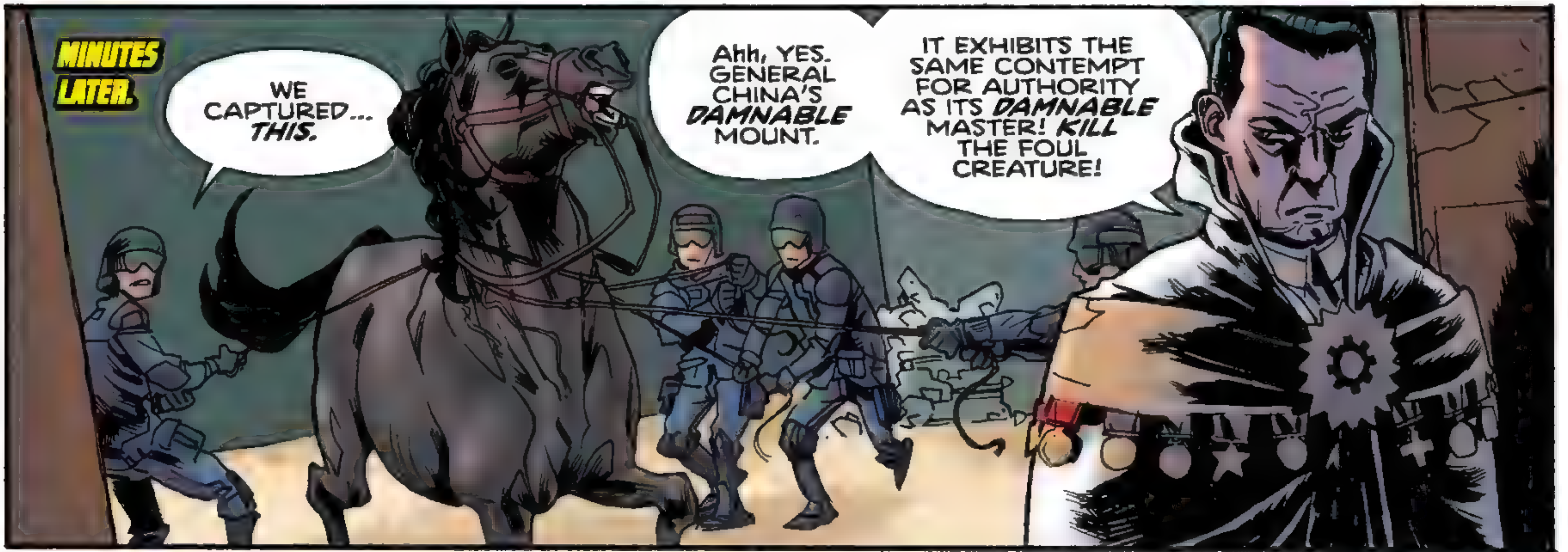


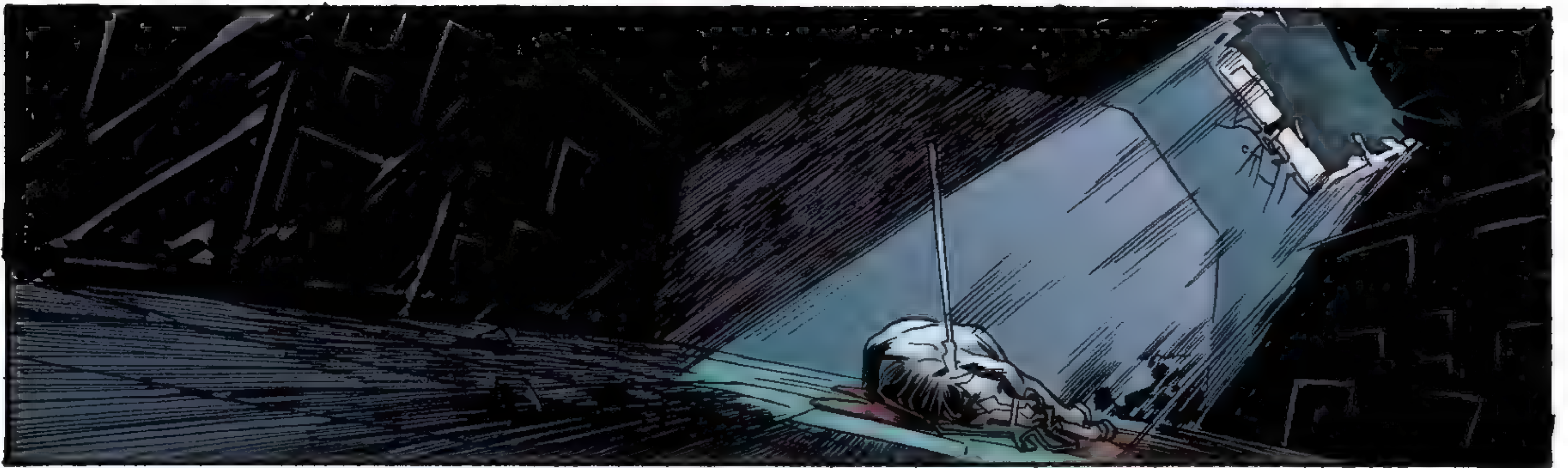










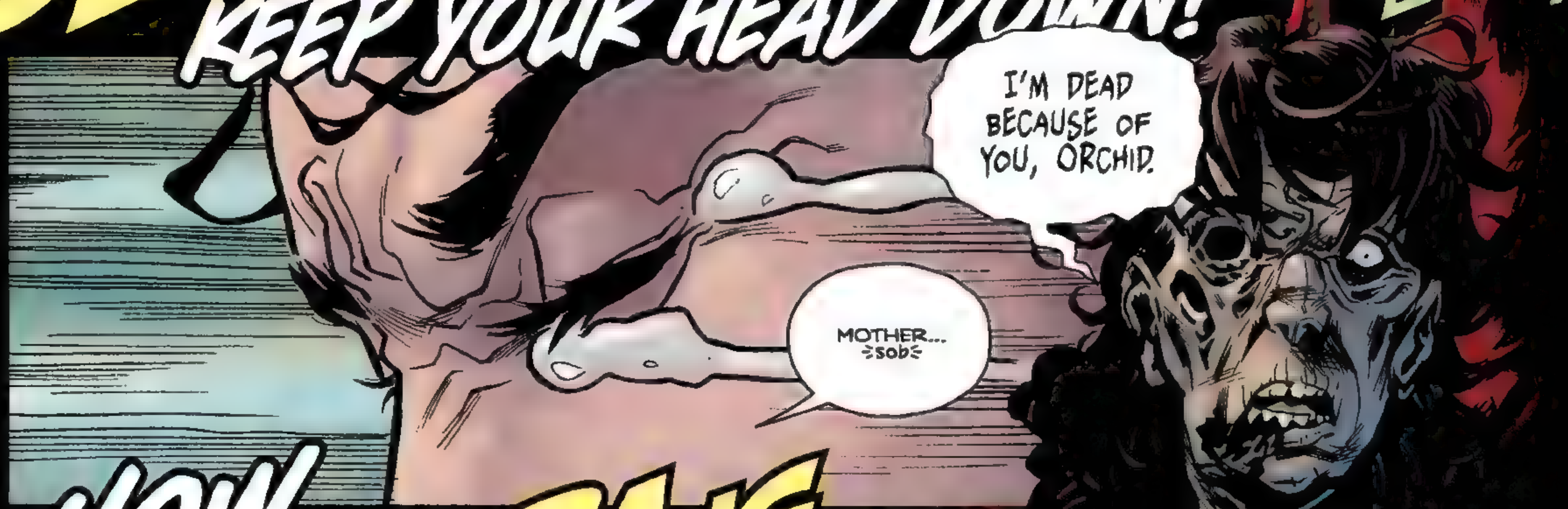








BLAM BLAM BLAM GALLOP GALLOP
KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN!



I'M DEAD
BECAUSE OF
YOU, ORCHID.

MOTHER...
~sob~

HOW MANY? BANG
RANG THE
SPIDERS
ARE GAINING!

GALLOP GALLOP

YOU SAID
YOU WOULD PROTECT
ME, ORCHID...AND
YOU DIDN'T.

~sob~
YEHZU.
~sob~

**GET TO
THE TREE LINE!**

BLAM BLAM KABOOM

IT WAS YOU
WHO LED ME TO MY
DEATH, ORCHID. IT WAS
ALL YOUR FAULT.



NONE OF
US COULD HAVE
SAVED THEM,
ORCHID! NOW,
HOLD ON!

AND...
AND...OPAL.
~sob~



STEADY,
SIMON! STAY
CLOSE!

**BLAM BLAM
BLAM**



CAN'T YOU GO
ANY FASTER?
THEY'RE ALMOST
ON US!

I'M
TRYING!



THIS
SHOULD
SLOW 'EM
DOWN.



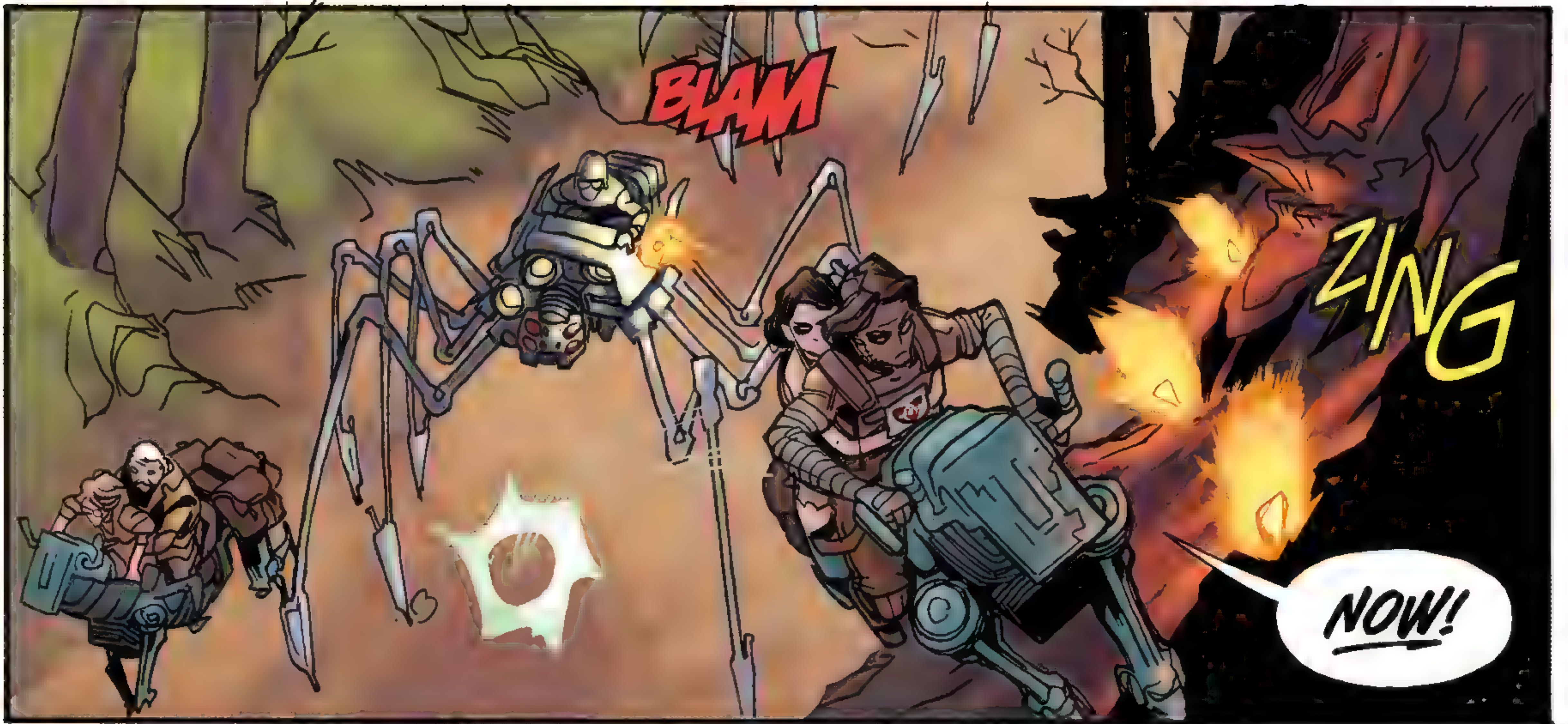
KRAKK



VEER
RIGHT ON
MY SIGNAL,
SIMON!

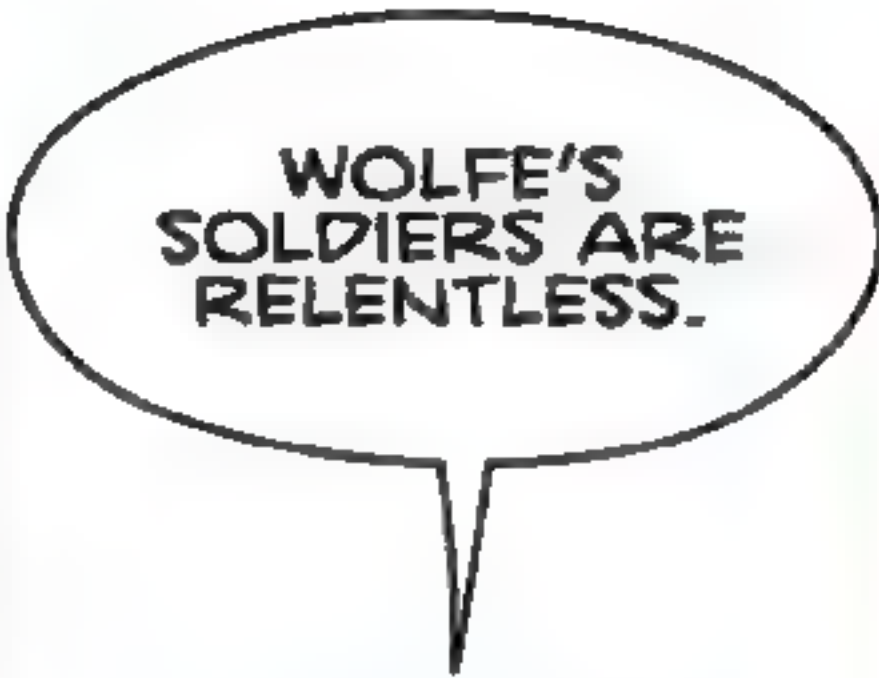
ON MY
SIGNAL,
SIMON...!

ANZIO,
CAN WE SWITCH
HORSES? I'M VERY
UNCOMFORTABLE. DOES
YOURS HAVE A SOFTER
SADDLE? I'VE GOT
BRUISES ALL OVER
MY--





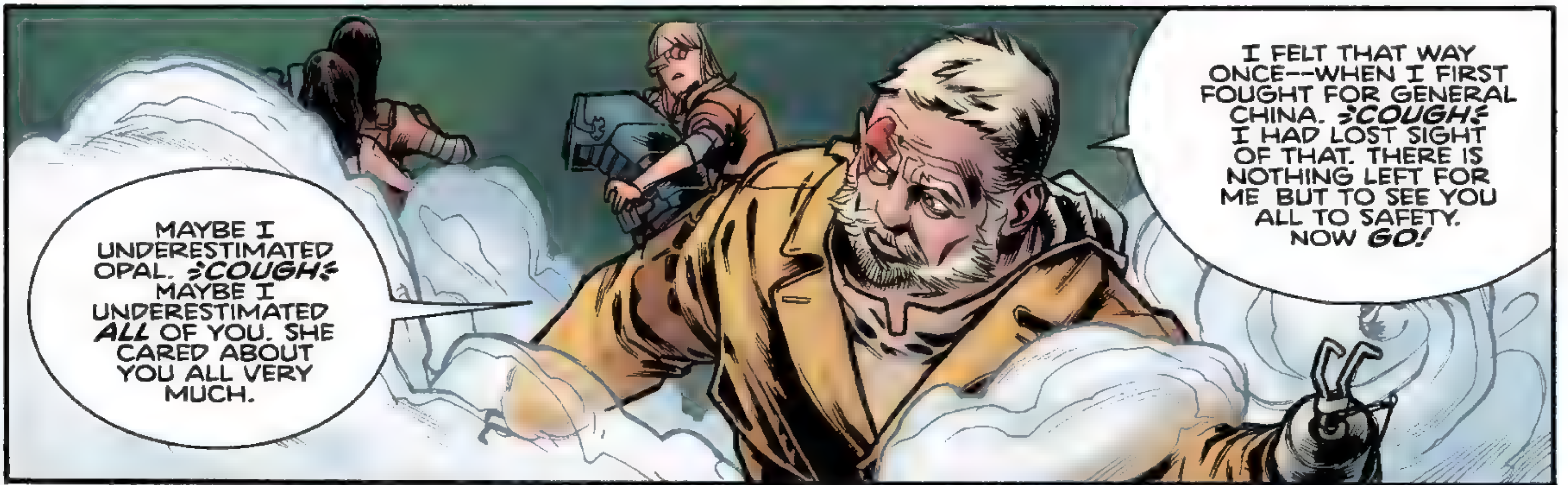
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! THEY'RE GAINING ON US!



WOLFE'S SOLDIERS ARE RELENTLESS.



THEY WON'T STOP UNTIL SOMEONE STOPS THEM FOR GOOD!



MAYBE I UNDERESTIMATED OPAL. *SCOUGH* MAYBE I UNDERESTIMATED ALL OF YOU. SHE CARED ABOUT YOU ALL VERY MUCH.

I FELT THAT WAY ONCE--WHEN I FIRST FOUGHT FOR GENERAL CHINA. *SCOUGH* I HAD LOST SIGHT OF THAT. THERE IS NOTHING LEFT FOR ME BUT TO SEE YOU ALL TO SAFETY. NOW GO!



WESTIN! NO!

COME, SIMON. THERE'S NO GOING BACK! LET'S MAKE HIS SACRIFICE COUNT.

MAYBE HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT. DO YOU THINK HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT?



HE JUST MAY. NOW RIDE!



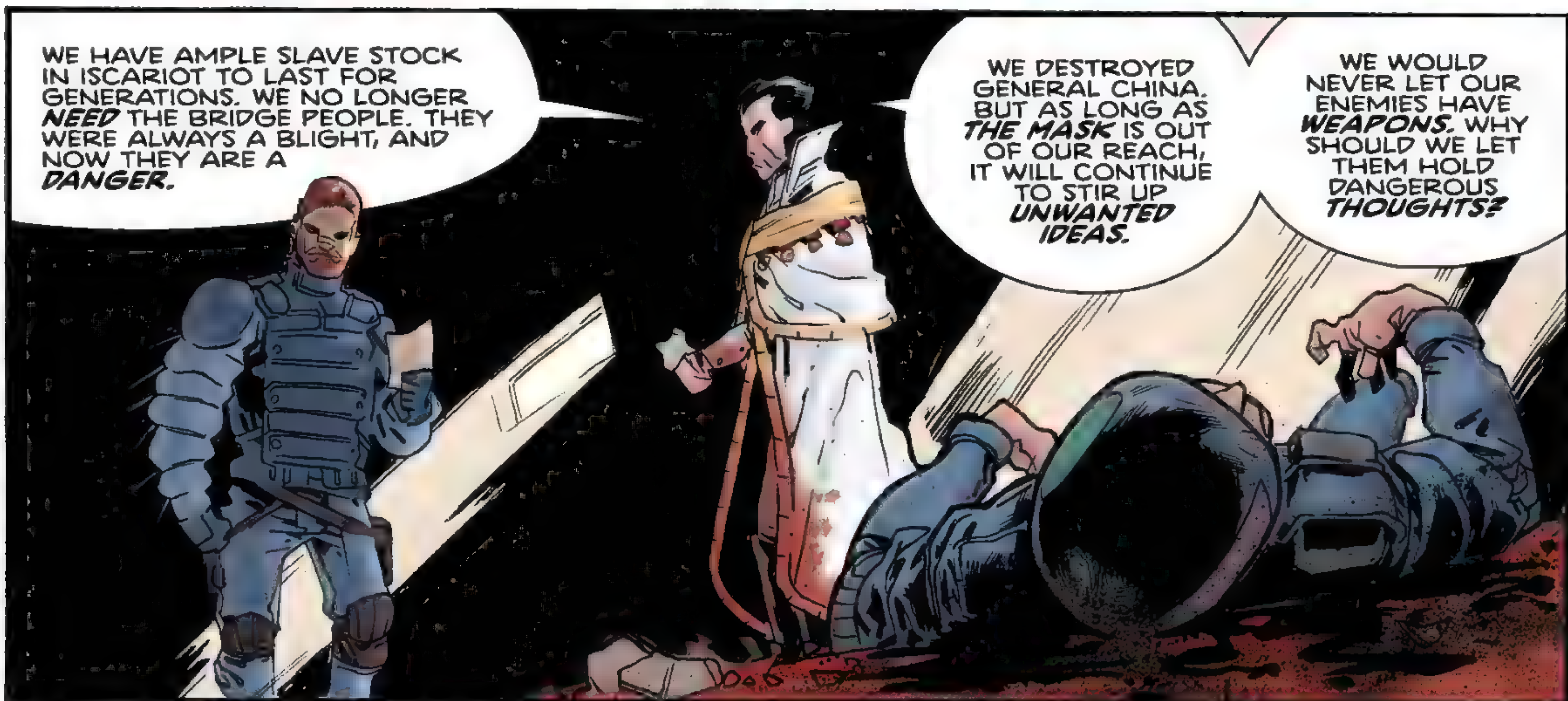




SOON.

...YES, YOU HEARD ME CORRECTLY. WE ARE GOING TO **EXTERMINATE** THE BRIDGE PEOPLE... EVERY MAN, EVERY WOMAN, AND EVERY CHILD!

WE MUST USE OUR **FULL** RESOURCES TO ELIMINATE THESE VERMIN ONCE AND FOR ALL.



WE HAVE AMPLE SLAVE STOCK IN ISCARIOT TO LAST FOR GENERATIONS. WE NO LONGER **NEED** THE BRIDGE PEOPLE. THEY WERE ALWAYS A BLIGHT, AND NOW THEY ARE A **DANGER**.

WE DESTROYED GENERAL CHINA. BUT AS LONG AS **THE MASK** IS OUT OF OUR REACH, IT WILL CONTINUE TO STIR UP **UNWANTED IDEAS**.

WE WOULD NEVER LET OUR ENEMIES HAVE **WEAPONS**. WHY SHOULD WE LET THEM HOLD **DANGEROUS THOUGHTS?**



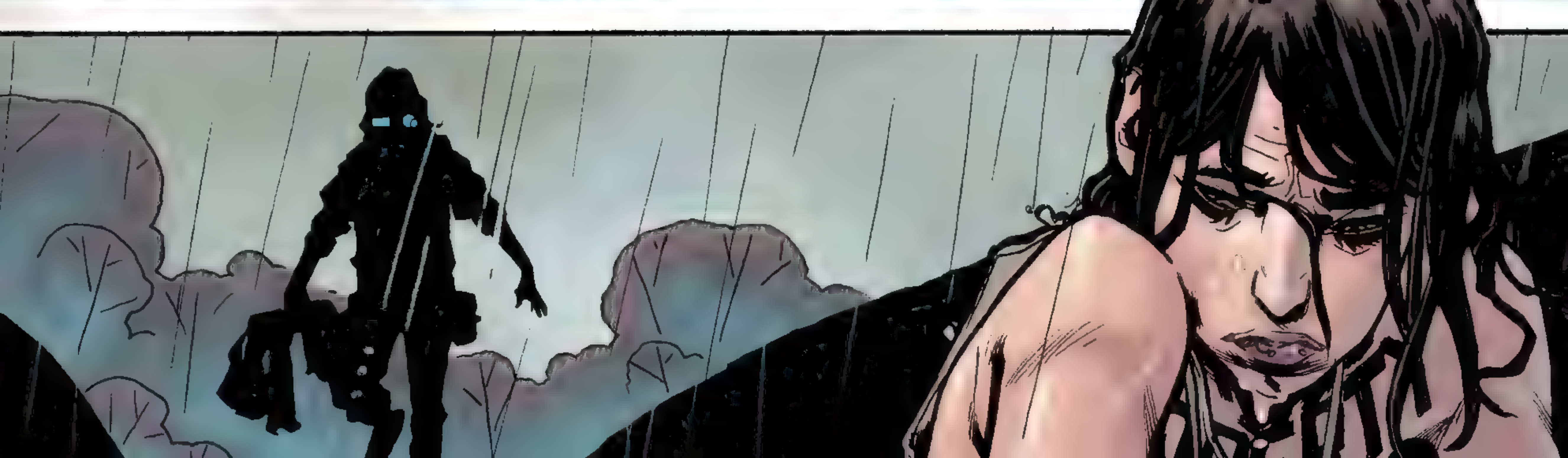
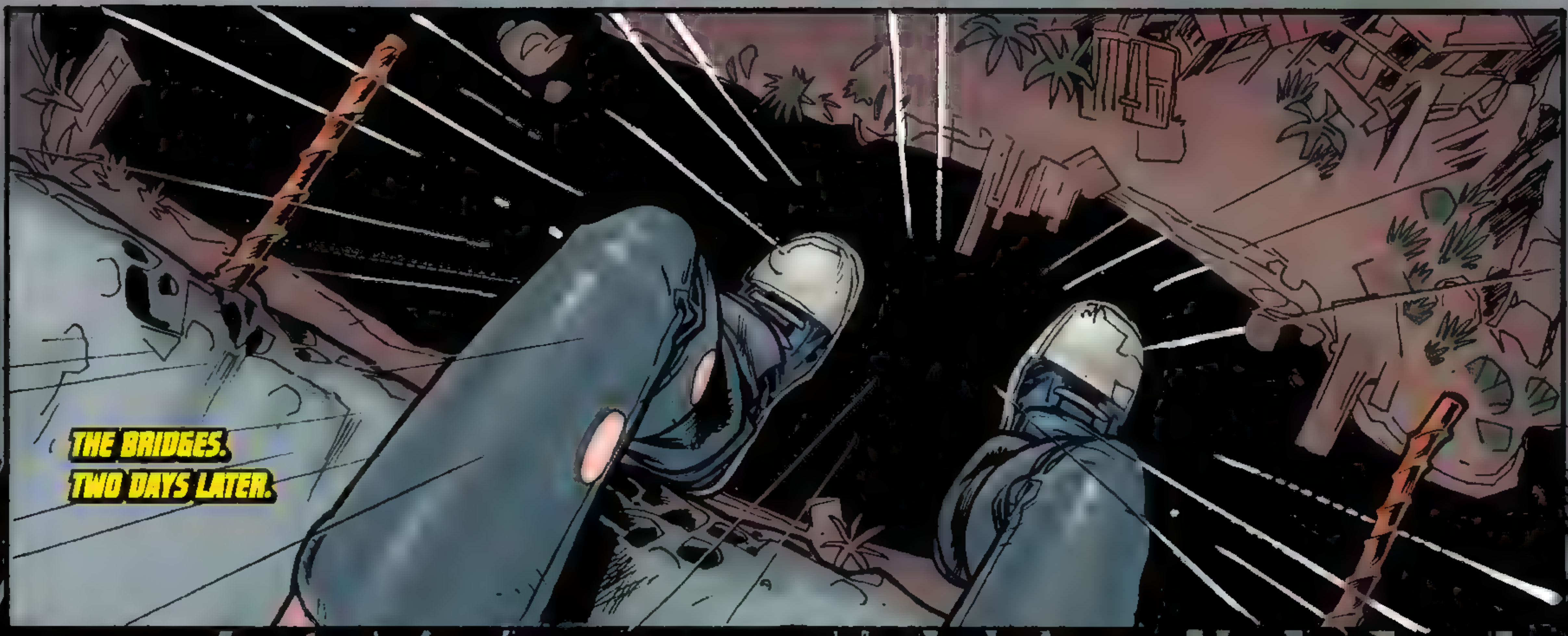
BUT A DANGER RECOGNIZED IS A DANGER DEFEATED! THOSE WHO TODAY ARE SQUEAMISH WILL THANK US TOMORROW ON BENDED KNEES BECAUSE WE COURAGEOUSLY AND FIRMLY TOOK ON THIS TASK.

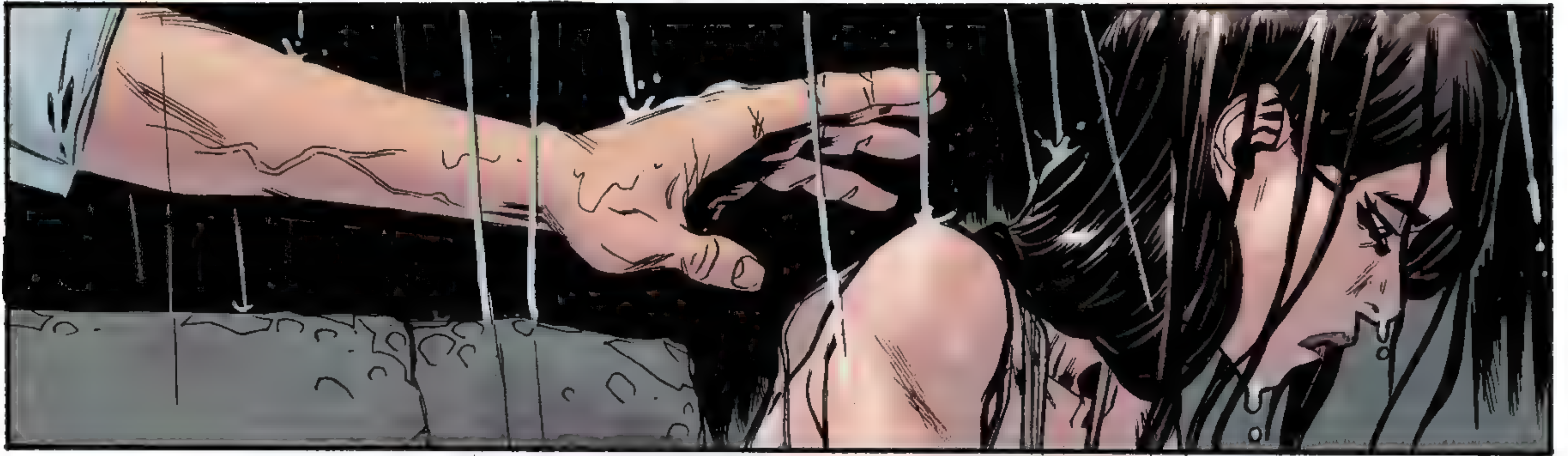
GATHER THE ARMY'S FULL STRENGTH! THE EXTERMINATION WILL BEGIN IN **THREE DAYS!**

MY LORD, I BELIEVE I CAN GET THE REBELS TO BRING THE MASK TO **US**.

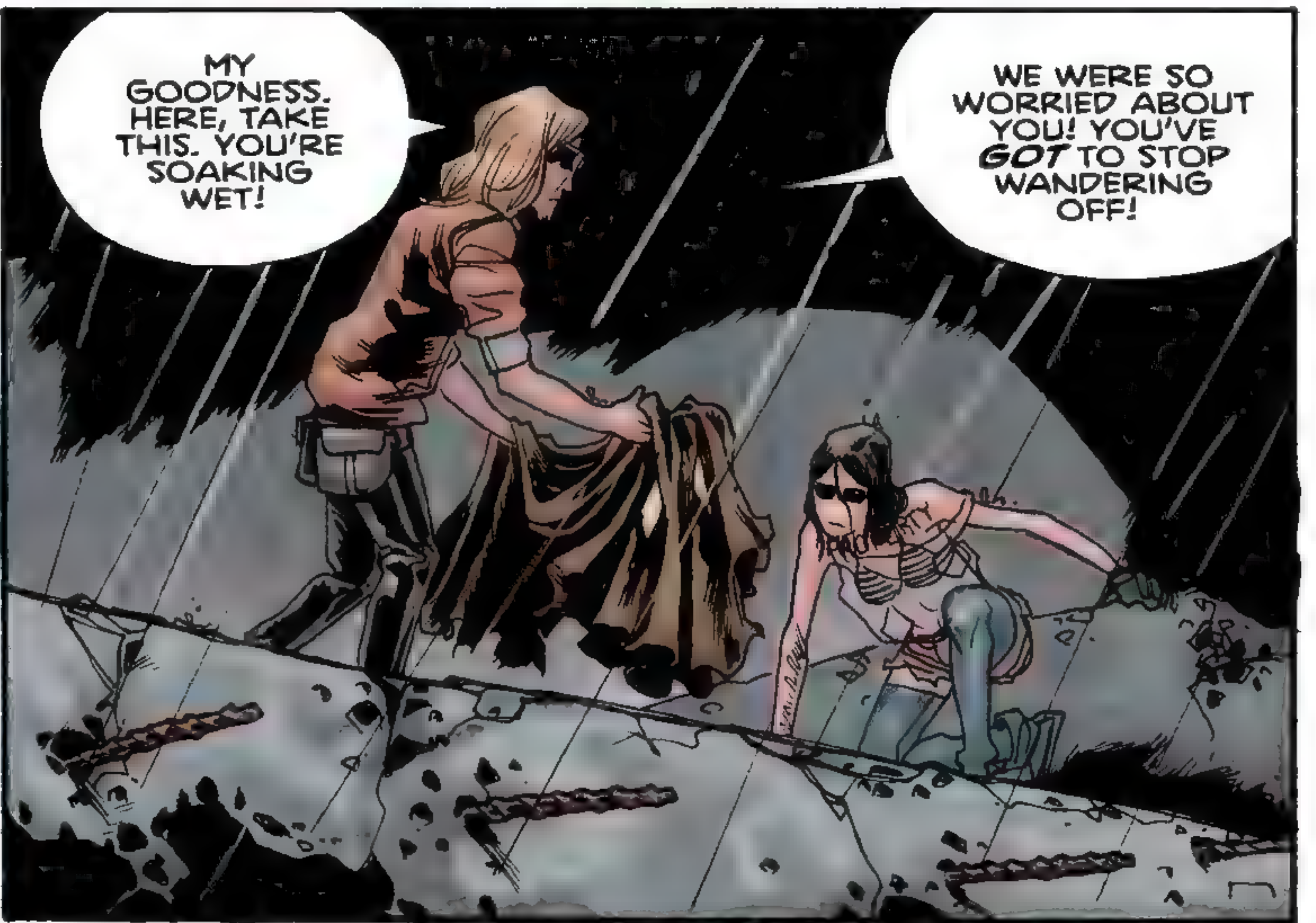


WALK WITH ME, GLETKIN... AND HAVE YOU SEEN BARRABAS? VERY UNLIKE HIM TO MISS A BRIEFING OF THIS IMPORTANCE.





ORCHID!
BE CAREFUL!
IT LOOKED
LIKE YOU WERE
ABOUT TO
GO OVER THE
EDGE!



MY
GOODNESS.
HERE, TAKE
THIS. YOU'RE
SOAKING
WET!

WE WERE SO
WORRIED ABOUT
YOU! YOU'VE
GOT TO STOP
WANDERING
OFF!



YOU *KNOW*
IT'S NOT SAFE
OUT HERE.
WOLFE'S
SCOUTS ARE
EVERYWHERE!



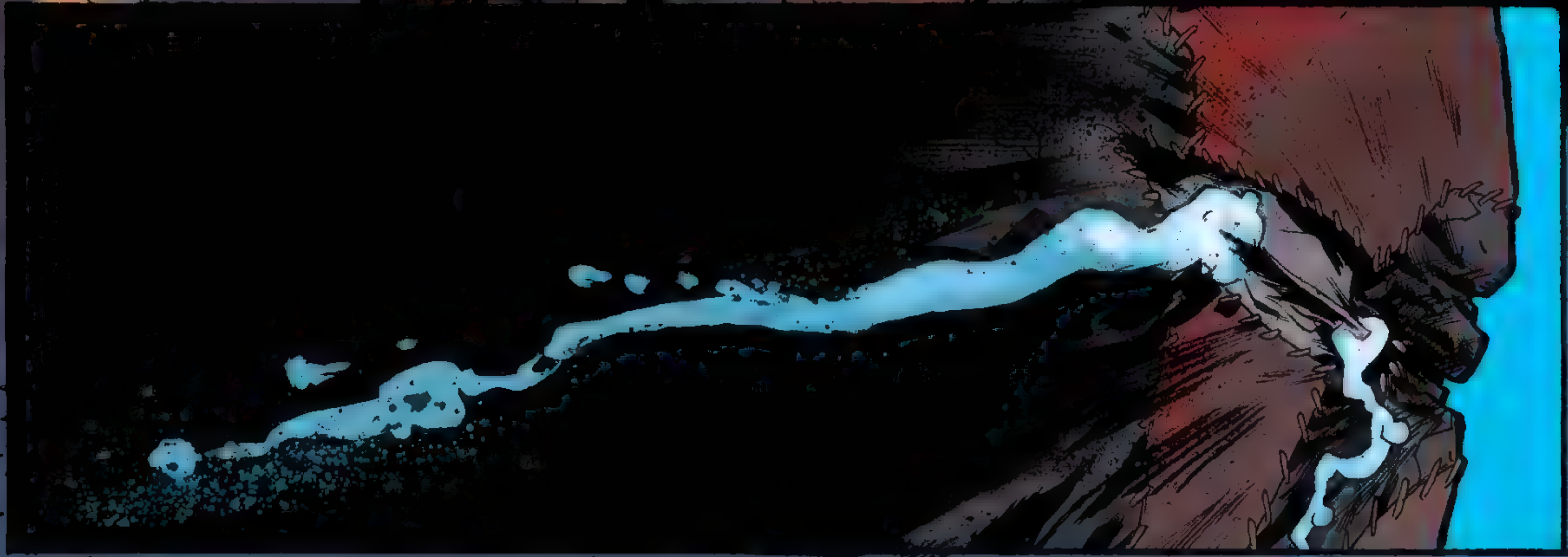
I...I'M
EMPTY, SIMON.
THEY'RE **ALL**
GONE AND
IT'S MY—

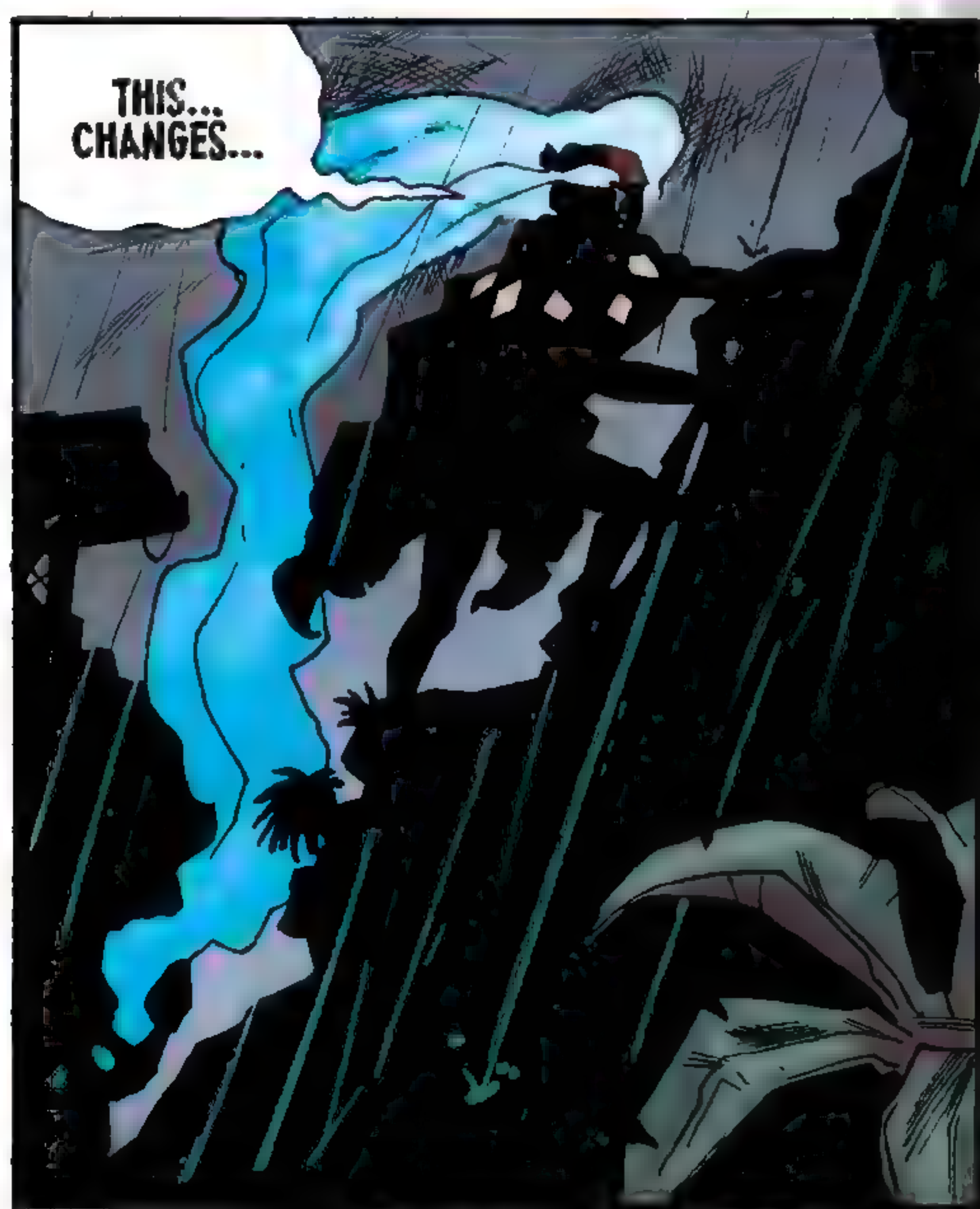
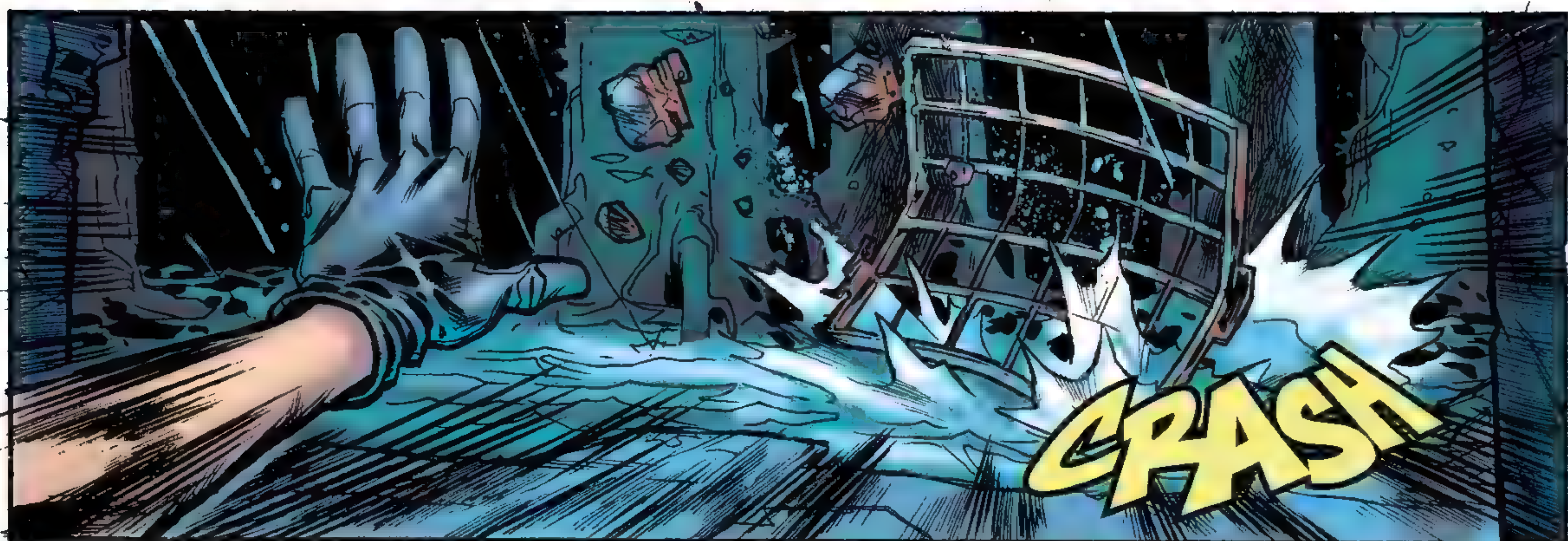
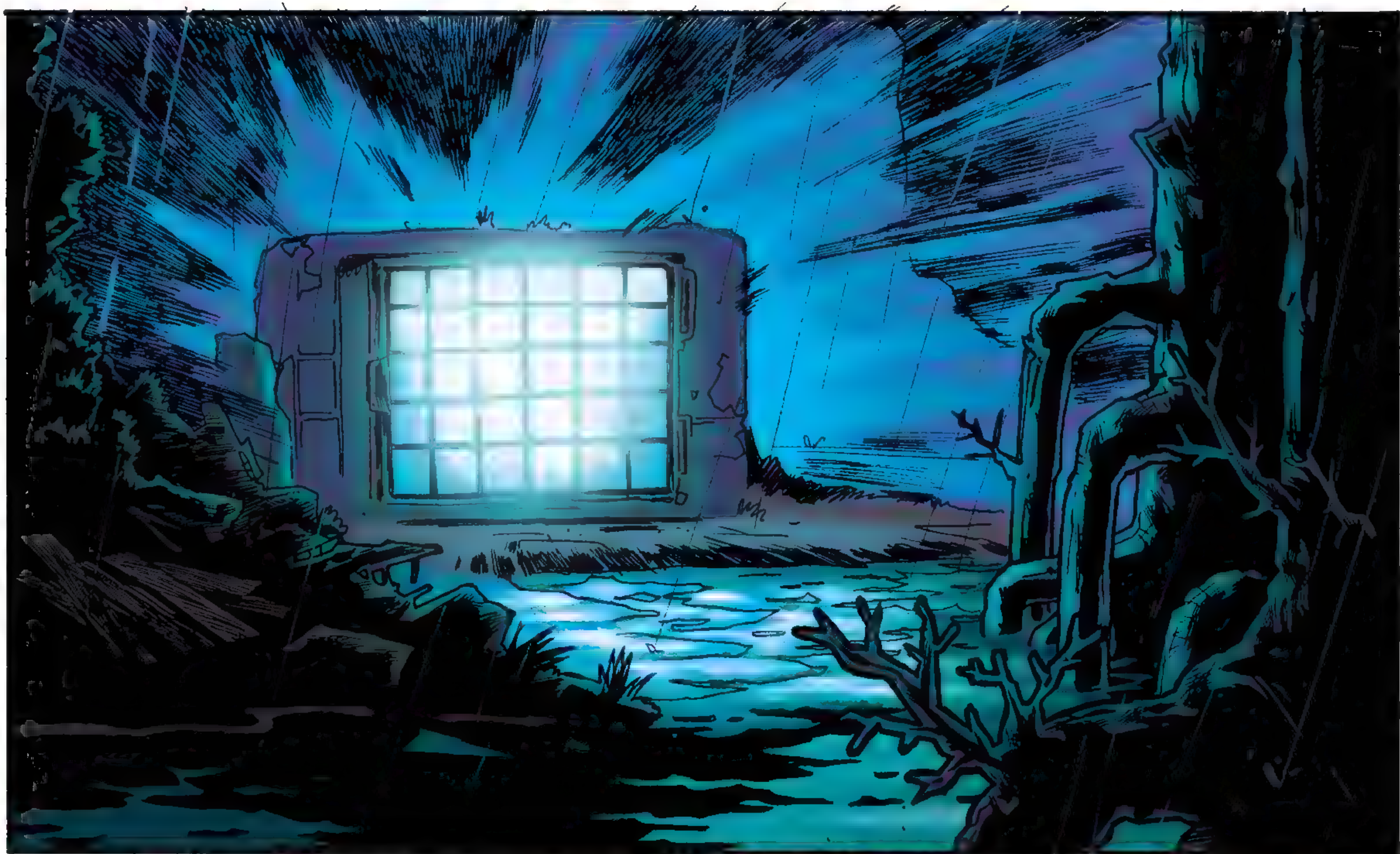
COME. LET'S
FIND ANZIO. HE
EXPROPRIATED A FEW
MORE MECH HORSES
THIS MORNING! THAT'S
GOOD, RIGHT? HE
ALWAYS HAS A WAY
OF CHEERING *ME*
UP!



THE PEOPLE ARE SCATTERED, COWERING. WORD OF THE COMING SLAUGHTER HAS SPREAD. EVEN *WITH* OPAL WE WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE, BUT WITHOUT HER...







THIS...
CHANGES...



...EVERYTHING.

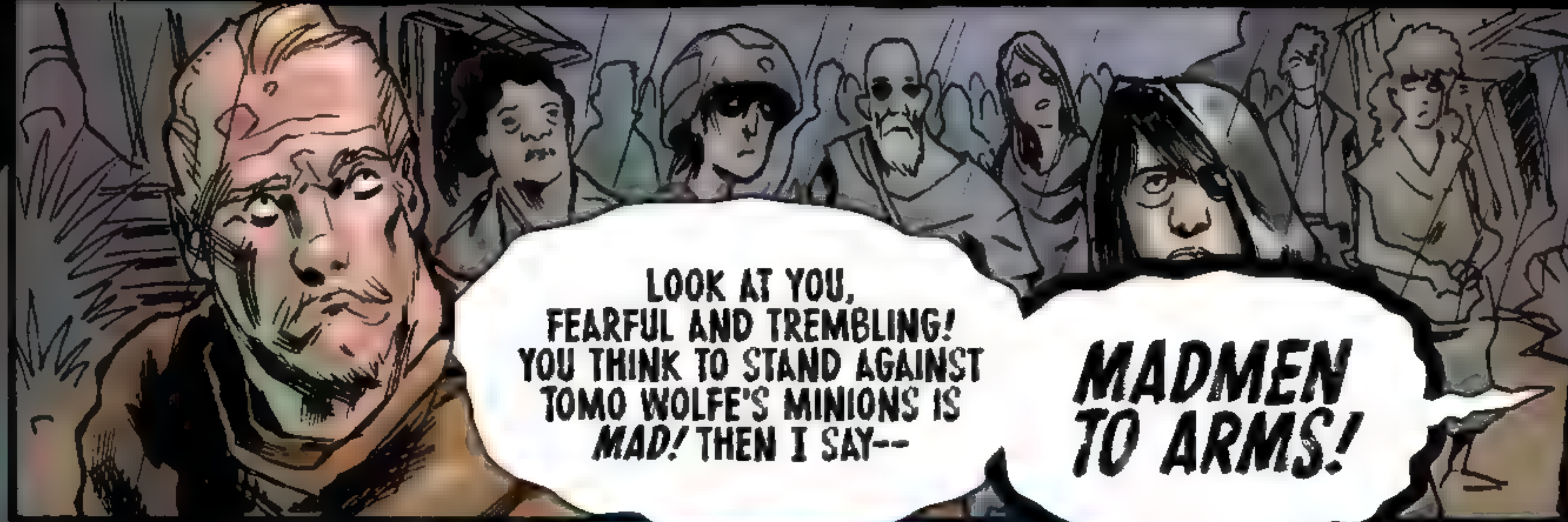


BRIDGE
PEOPLE! COME
OUT! *HIDE* NO
MORE!

IN THE
MORNING, TOMO
WOLFE'S ARMY WILL
MAKE ITS FINAL
ASSAULT!


WE ARE
OUTNUMBERED!
WE ARE UNARMED!
WE ARE WITHOUT
TIME OR HOPE!
YES...WE WILL
ALL BE DEAD
TOMORROW!

HOW THEN TO
DIE? ON OUR KNEES,
COWERING AND ALONE?
OR WILL WE STAND
TOGETHER? WILL WE
FIGHT TOGETHER AS
A PEOPLE?



LOOK AT YOU,
FEARFUL AND TREMBLING!
YOU THINK TO STAND AGAINST
TOMO WOLFE'S MINIONS IS
MAD! THEN I SAY--

**MADMEN
TO ARMS!**



"HAVE COURAGE, FOR I WILL
LEAD YOU IN THE BATTLE
THAT COMES AT DAWN!"

"THE LEGEND OF THE MASK
IS *TRUE*. ITS POWER IS
REAL. I HAVE BEEN IN
CHAINS MY WHOLE LIFE
AND I WILL BE IN CHAINS
NO MORE! IF YOU ARE
TOO COWARDLY TO FIGHT,
THEN I WILL FIGHT ALONE.

"BUT I SENSE
STRENGTH IN YOU,
A STRENGTH YOU DO
NOT KNOW! LET US
FIGHT *TOGETHER* AS
AN ARMY OF *SHADOW
REBELS*--AND IN OUR
FINAL HOUR LET'S
TAKE THOSE
BASTARDS DOWN
WITH US!"

"FOR THE WORLD HAS
BEEN INHERITED NOT
BY THE *GOOD*, NOT BY
THE *MEEK*, BUT BY THE
TERRIBLE. THERE MIGHT
BE A *BETTER WORLD*.
ONE DAY, BUT NONE OF
US WILL LIVE TO SEE IT!"

"HEAR ME NOW!
WE ARE WITHOUT
HOPE AND SO WE
ARE *FREE*. FREE TO
SHED THIS EXISTENCE
IN A BLAZING FIRE
OF *REVENGE*.

"SO CRY *REBELLION*
FROM EVERY ROOFTOP
AND HOVEL! SOME
FOOL ONCE TOLD ME
THAT THE *ESSENCE* OF
REBELLION IS *LOVE*. IT
IS *NOT*. REBELLION IS
A *HAMMER*, WHICH
WE WILL USE TO
CRUSH OUR ENEMIES
COME THE DAWN!"

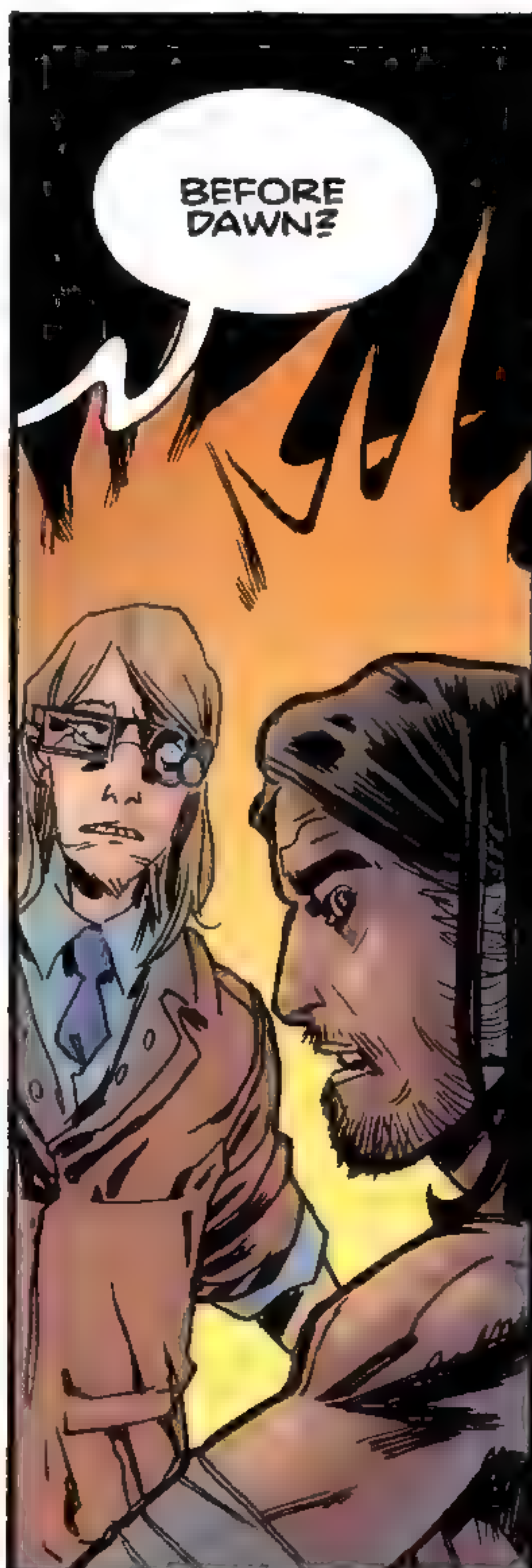
"WE DO NOT
SEEK LIBERTY.
WE SEEK ONLY
DESTRUCTION.
AND THROUGH
DESTRUCTION
WE WILL BE
LIBERATED.

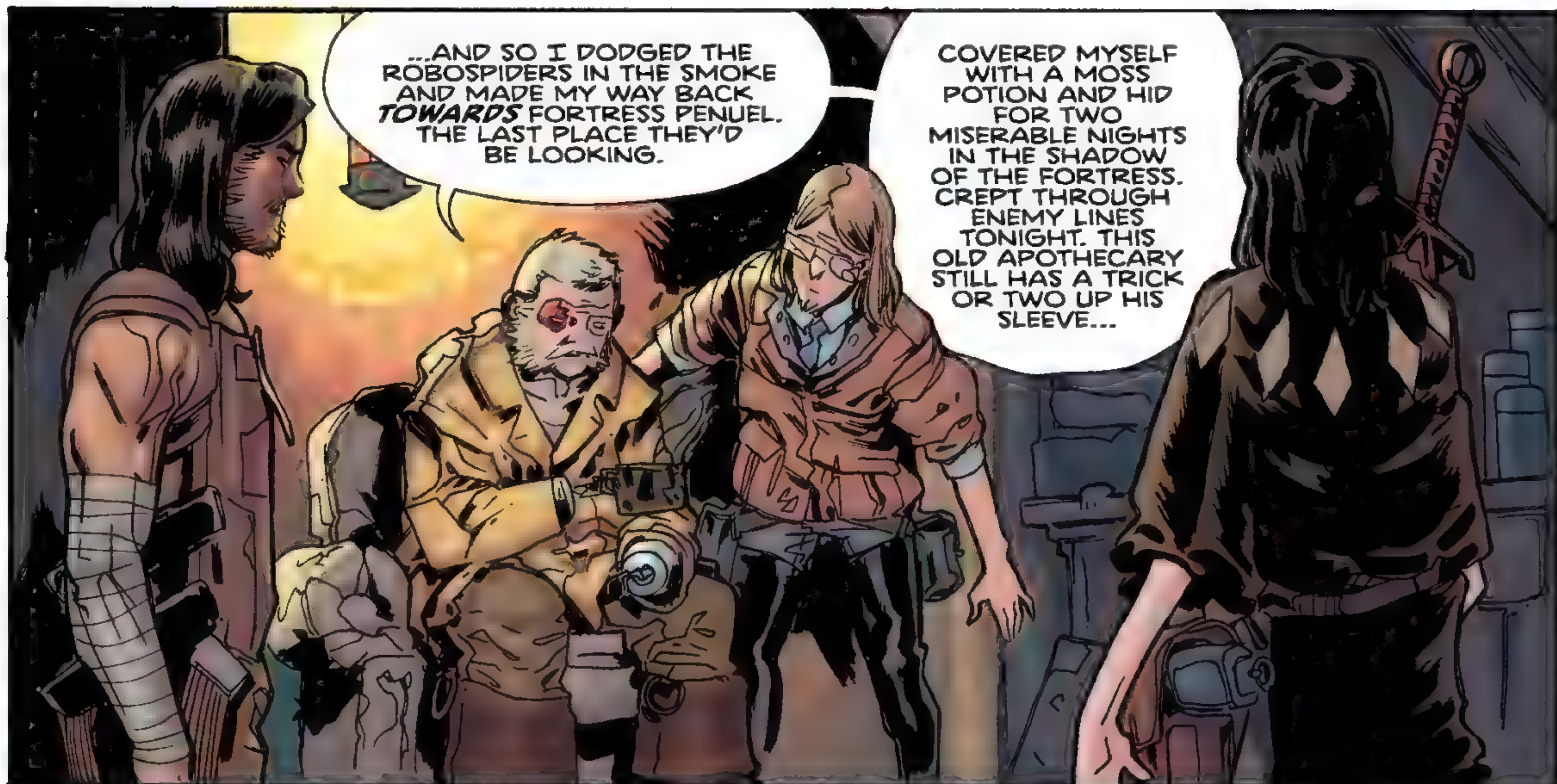
"NO, I AM NOT
GENERAL CHINA.
GENERAL CHINA IS
DEAD. I AM ONE OF
YOU. I AM ALL OF
YOU. CALL ME...
ORCHID.


"I WILL BE YOUR *ANGEL OF
RETRIBUTION*. I WILL BE YOUR
WARRIOR SAINT. FOLLOW ME
AND LET OUR FOES TREMBLE
AT OUR COMING!"

"FOR THIS IS NOT A
FIGHT FOR WHAT WILL
BE. THIS IS A FIGHT
TO DESTROY ALL
THAT'S GONE WRONG.

"THIS FIGHT IS NOT TO
BUILD A BETTER WORLD--
**IT'S TO DESTROY
THIS ONE."**







BRIDGE
PEOPLE! THERE WILL
BE **NO TOMORROW**. THE
BATTLE OF THE BRIDGES
IS AT HAND! THE SUN
RISES ON OUR
LAST DAY.

I WAS A
PROSTITUTE AND A
SLAVE FOR THEIR
PLEASURE AND THEIR
PROFIT BUT I AM **NO**
ONE'S PROPERTY TODAY!
WE **WERE** THE DIRT
BENEATH THEIR FEET...
DOCILE AND FIGHTING
AMONG OURSELVES
OVER CRUMBS. BUT
LOOK AT US
NOW!

VALKS AND
BEGGARS! ADDICTS
AND CRIMINALS! THE
HUNGRY AND THE
FORGOTTEN! THE BROKEN
AND THE HOMELESS!
STANDING SHOULDER TO
SHOULDER AGAINST
THE COMING
ONSLAUGHT...

TAKE HEART,
FOR WE ARE **NO LONGER**
ISOLATED, NO LONGER ALONE.
IN OUR **FINAL HOUR** AT LAST
WE HAVE ONE ANOTHER. AND
TOGETHER WE WILL MEET
WHATEVER COMES!

BUT WILL
WE WAIT HERE
LIKE LAMBS
BRACING FOR
SLAUGHTER?

NO! TODAY
WE WILL **STRIKE**
BACK AT OUR
TORMENTORS!

I NEED
EIGHT MARTYRS
TO FOLLOW ME INTO
THE TEETH OF THE
STORM!

WE WILL FIGHT OUR
WAY THROUGH THE **HEART**
OF WOLFE'S ARMY AND INTO
THE DEPTHS OF FORTRESS
PENUEL! THERE OUR **ONE**
HOPE REMAINS.

TOMO WOLFE
DOES NOT KNOW IT...
BUT WE ARE COMING
FOR HIM!





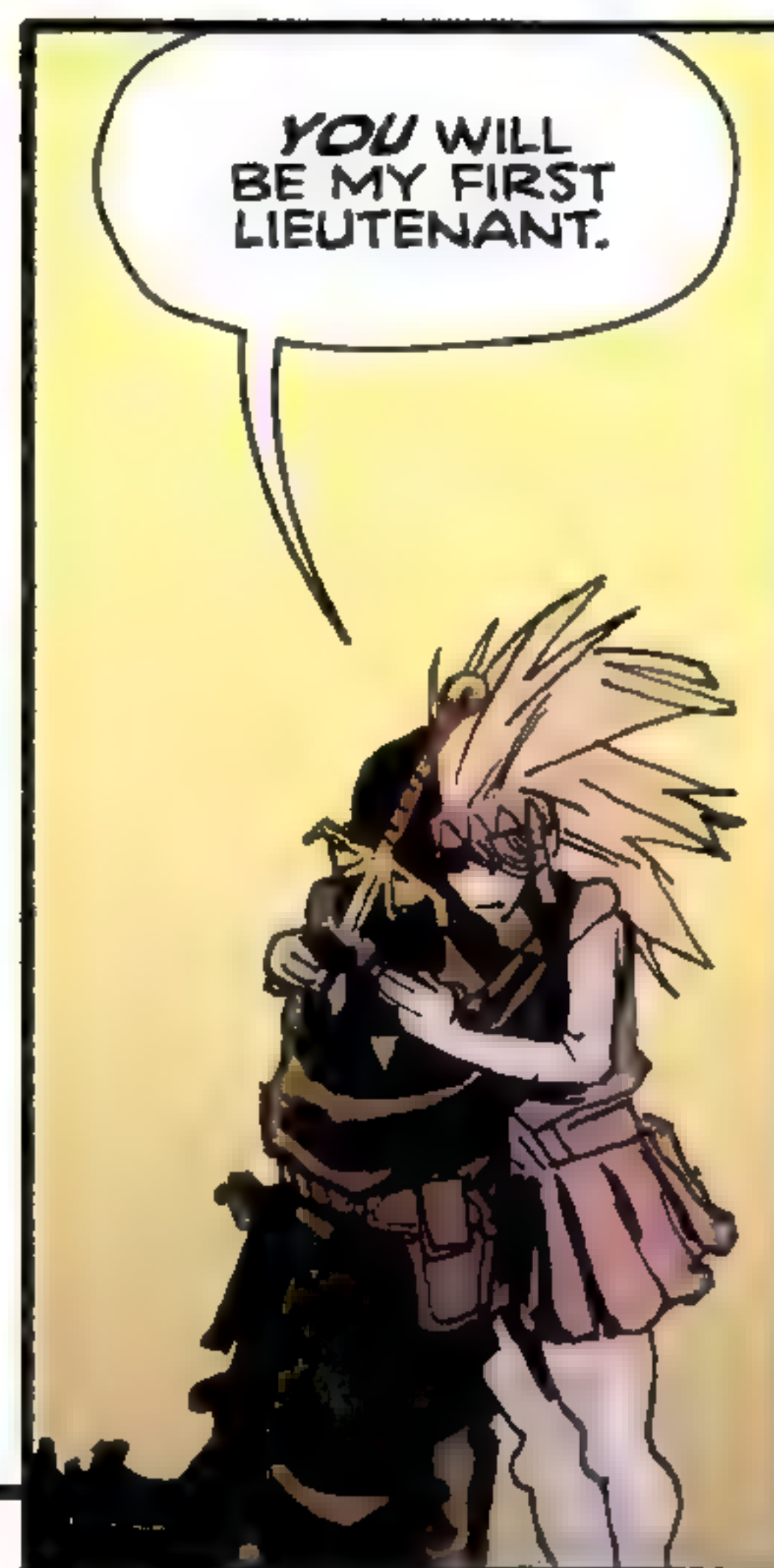
YES...OF COURSE. NOT THE BIGGEST. NOT THE STRONGEST. BUT THE MOST FEARLESS...AND WITH NOTHING TO LOSE.



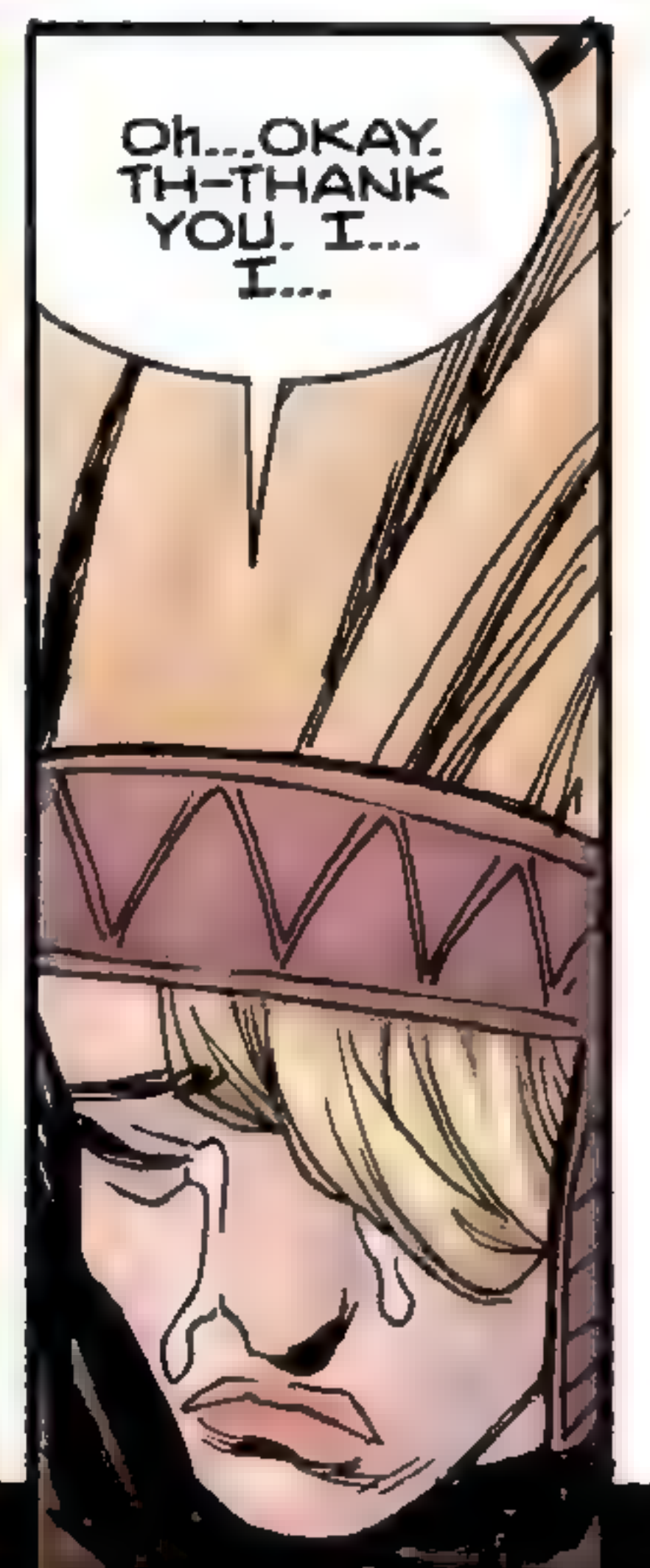
WAIT...I REMEMBER YOU. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO BETRAYED ME TO THE SLAVE TRADERS... WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

LAIKA, SIR, I MEAN... GENERAL. I... I...AM SO VERY SORRY...I DIDN'T MEAN...PLEASE, ORCHID, DON'T HURT ME...

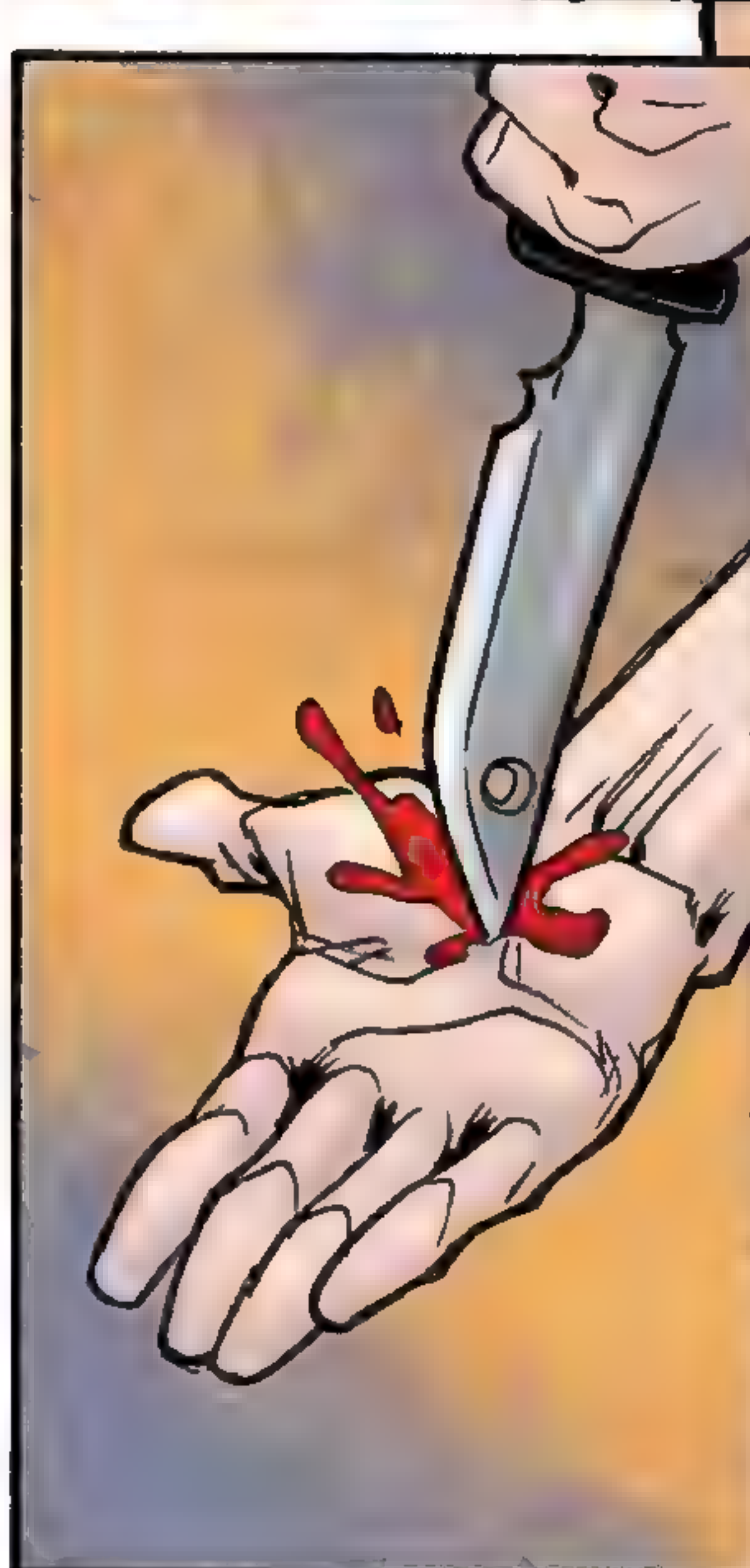
HURT YOU? LAIKA, I WAS YOU. I TAUGHT YOU TO LOOK OUT FOR YOURSELF--AND ONLY YOURSELF. NOW I'LL TEACH YOU HOW TO DIE FOR YOUR FRIENDS.



YOU WILL BE MY FIRST LIEUTENANT.



Oh...OKAY. TH--THANK YOU. I... I...



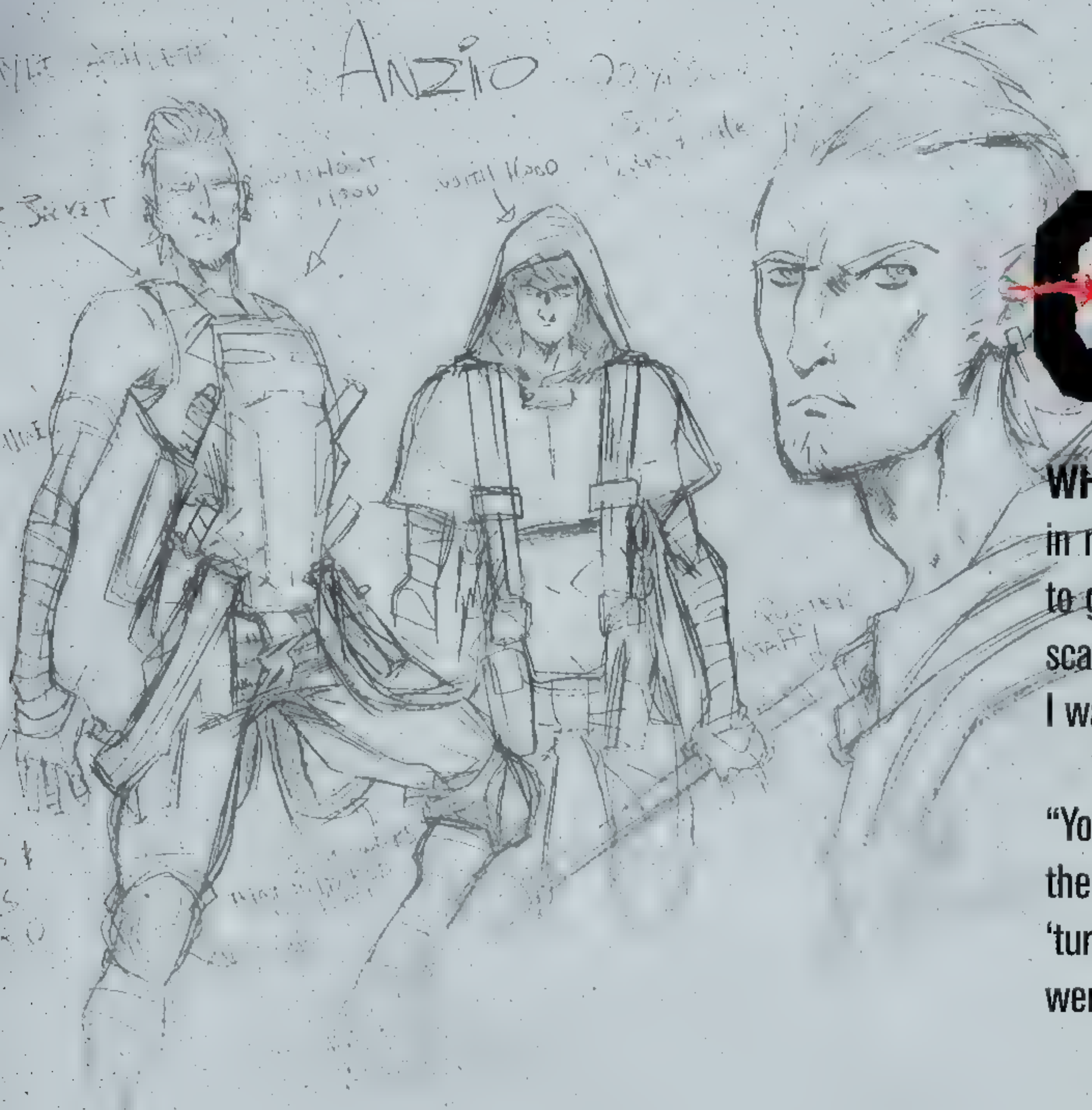
WELCOME HOME.



ORCHID... WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

"NOW
WE GO TO
WAR."





THE MAKING OF ORCHID

WHEN I WAS THIRTEEN YEARS OLD, the KKK hung a noose in my family's garage. I woke up for school that day, ran out to get my bike, and BOOM, there it was. I was scared. Super scared. Many nights after that incident, I couldn't sleep because I was afraid the Klan would come back.

Years later, I told the story to a friend in college. He said, "You're a pacifist, right?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Okay. Well, if the Klan comes down your driveway tonight, would you rather 'turn the other cheek' or would you rather me and my friends were in the bushes with baseball bats?"

That stumped me.

Greed, anger, altruism, bigotry, religious zealotry, obedience to orders, mental illness, hunger, fear, resistance, revenge. There are many motivations that cause people to turn to violence.

But when if ever is violence legitimate? And who decides? And is it possible to create a peaceful world by violent means?

And how to best even consider the issue? Rational inquiry or sweat lodge visions? Cold logic or immersion in poetry? Instinct? Reason? Prayer?

I've chewed on these questions my whole life. Explored them in my music . . . and in this book. And, I admit, I still haven't come up with any answers. Why?

Pressure. Subtle yet pervasive pressure. It's there from the earliest days in school. Echoed in consumerist culture. Given weight by omnipresent propaganda. Pressure. To make you feel helpless. Your role is simple, clearly defined, and comfortable: ratify decisions and consume. Or opt out and fall through the cracks.

Or . . .

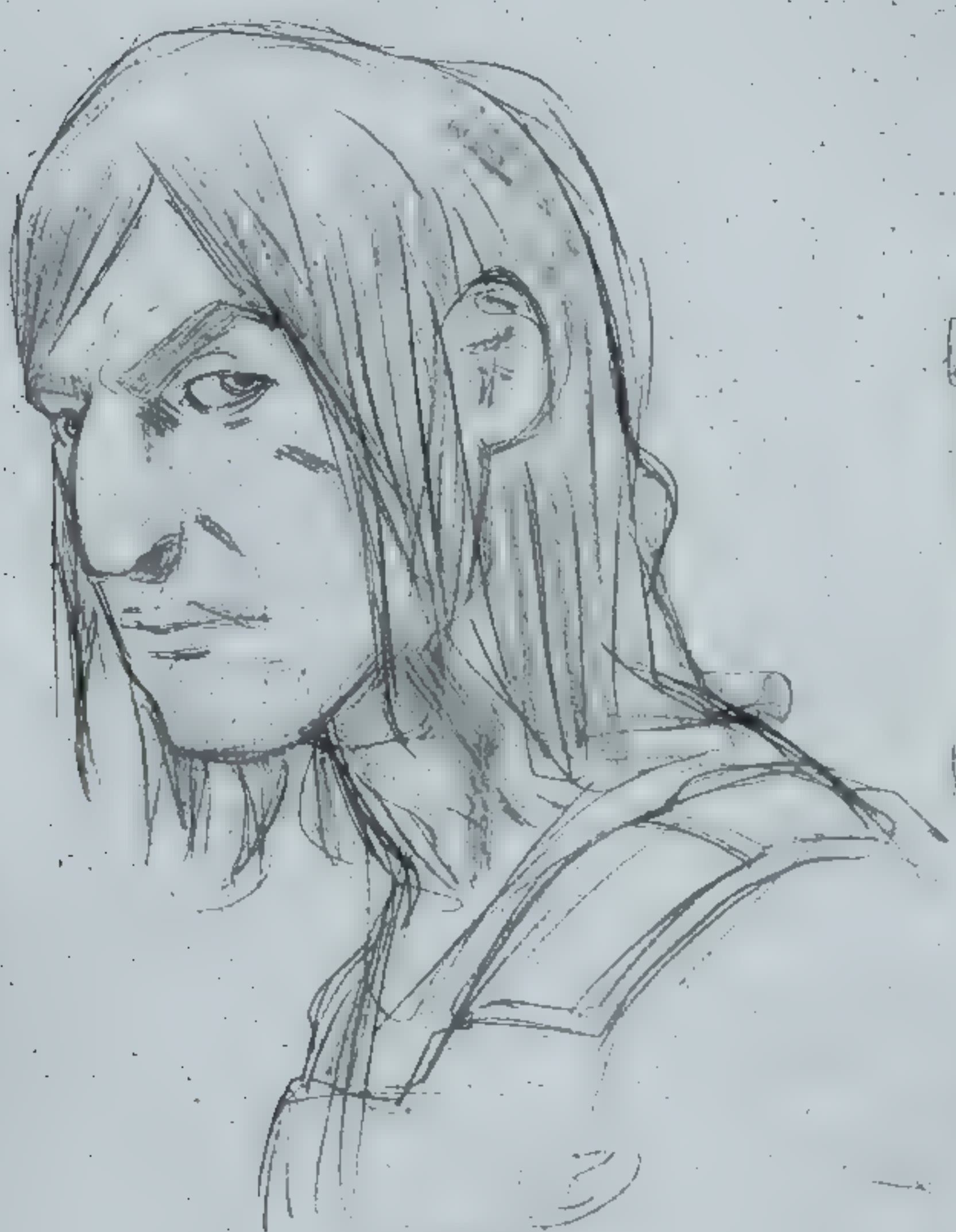
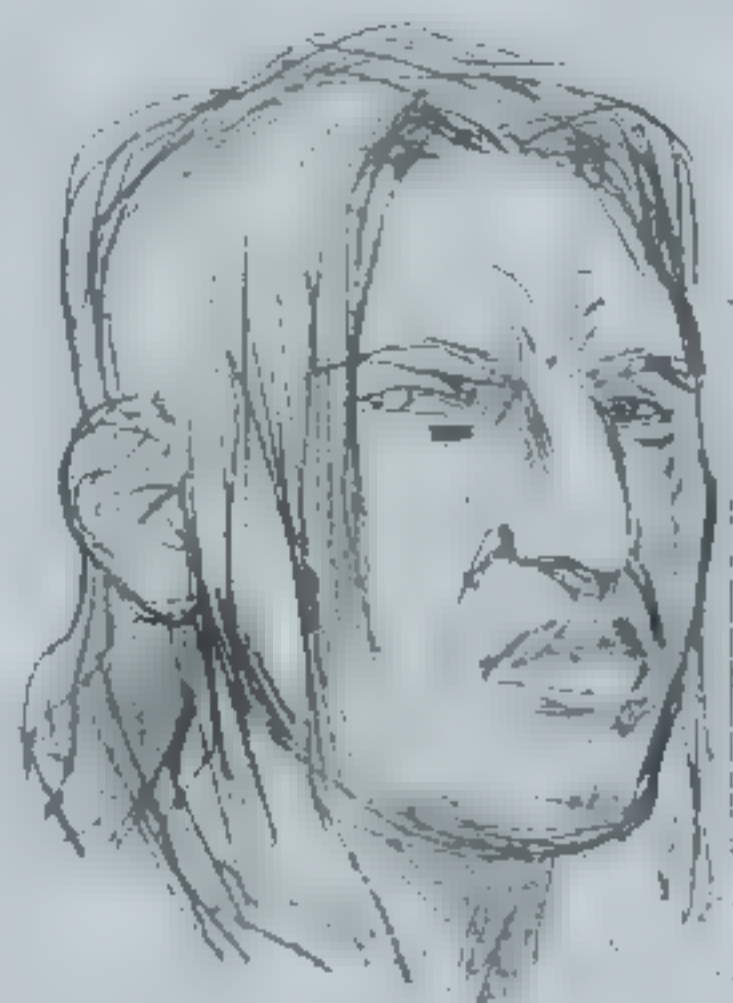
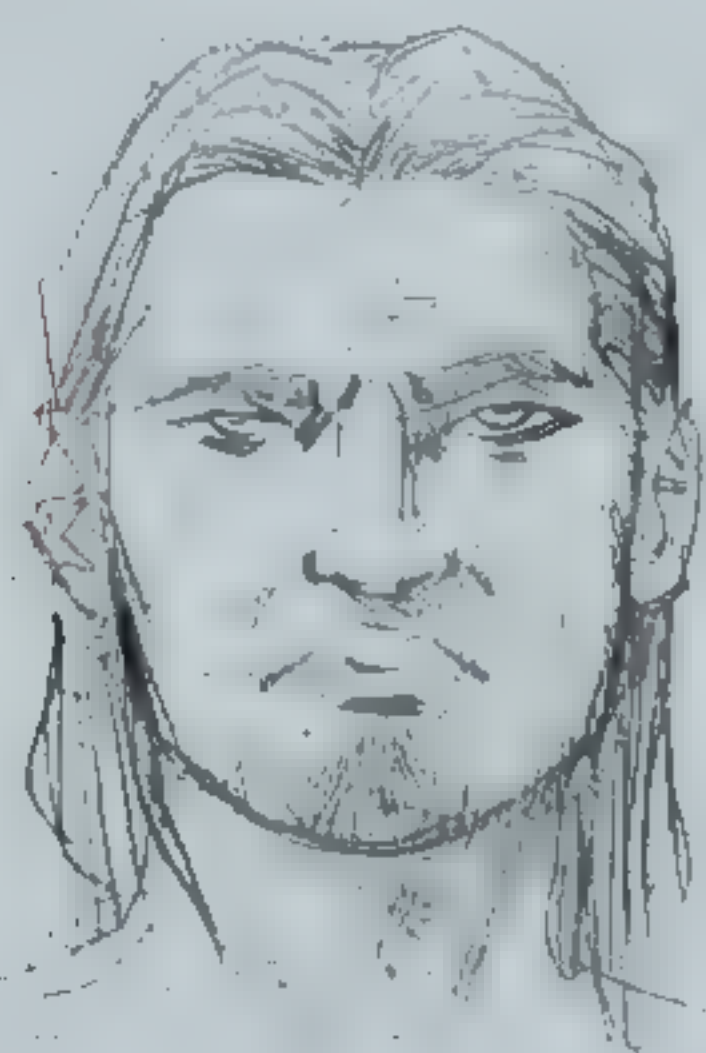
Resist.

Because resistance is feasible even for those who are not heroes by nature.

At least that's what I'll be telling myself tonight when I'm in the bushes with a baseball bat.

TOM MORELLO

Described by Tom Morello in his initial outline as "Che Guevara meets Robin Hood," Anzio went through a number of design variations before his final look was decided upon.



AT RIGHT: Scott Hepburn's designs for some of Tomo Wolfe's fearsome machines—the steeds used by Don Gletkin and the gargoyles that adorn Fortress Penuei.

BELOW: Hepburn's design work on Gletkin's loyal half-machine, half-monster Sire Vares.



SIRE
VARESH

WESTIN

Burn scar
NO EYEBROW

RINGS
FASTENERS
FOR EASY
GRABBING



MORE DESIGNS FROM THE HEPBURN:

The apothecary of Gath, Opal's old ally Westin, a former hero of the rebellion, and his burly, knife-slinging, swamp-gladiator compatriot, Feathers—a radiation-mutated giant of a man.

WESTIN

FEATHERS

THE FIGHT HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN!

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ORCHID VOLUME 3 SUMMER 2013

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Visit NightwatchmanMusic.com and enter the following access codes for a free musical score by Tom Morello:

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CHAPTER 8: WOLFE555



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Prices and availability subject to change without notice.

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"BEYOND BRILLIANT. IF EVER THERE WAS A PERFECT COMIC, THIS WOULD BE IT. THERE IS SO MUCH HEART AND INSPIRATION ON EACH PAGE, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO NOT BECOME FULLY IMMERSED IN THE STORY AND THE CHARACTERS." —BAMFAS.COM

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TOM MORELLO'S ORCHID

THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE starts when someone starts it. And this fight starts . . . NOW.

Having nothing left to lose, Orchid—a young woman on a transformative journey from streetwise prostitute to fierce warrior—is hell bent on revenge against an oppressive dictator. She unwittingly forms an alliance with an unlikely hero named Simon and a mysterious warrior, Opal. In a world divided by extreme wealth and abject poverty, what chance does this small force have against a society so cleverly constructed against them?

The adventure continues in this second installment of Tom Morello (*Rage Against the Machine*, *The Nightwatchman*) and Scott Hepburn's (*Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*) groundbreaking work whose heroes must confront unspeakable beasts, pitiless violence, and overwhelming odds as they attempt to reclaim their lives and their world.

"[SCOTT] HEPBURN REALLY KNOWS HOW TO MAKE A READER FEEL SOMETHING."

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